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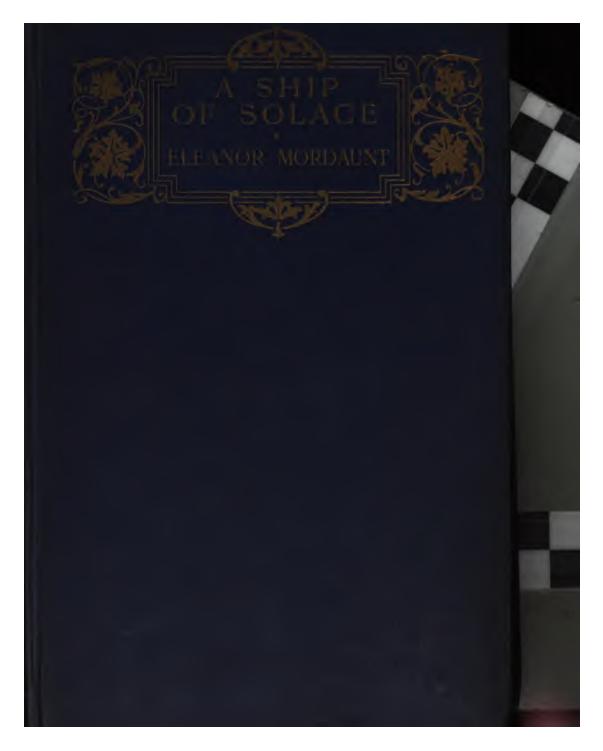
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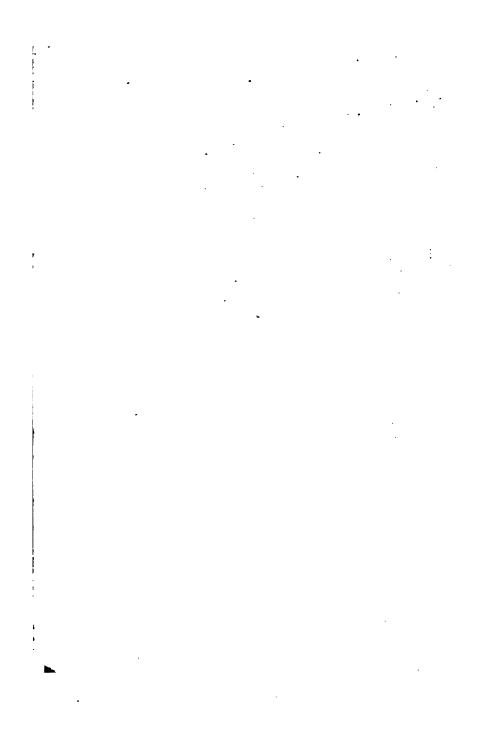
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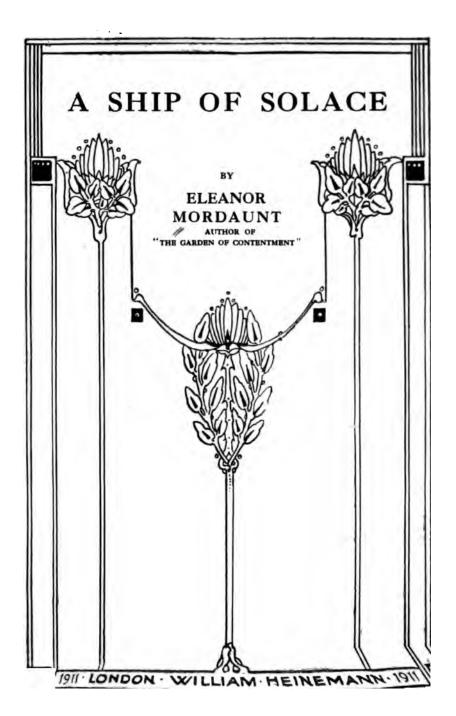
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CHAPTER I

"Tell me, ye naturalists, who first sounded the first march and retreat of the tides. Hither shalt thou come and no further—why doth not the water recover his right over the earth, being higher in Nature? Whence came the salt and who boiled it to make so much brine? When the winds are not only wild in a storm but stark mad in a hurricane, who is it that restores them again to their wits, and brings them asleep in a calm? Who made the mighty Whales which swim in a sea of water and have a sea of oil swimming in them? Who first caused the water to imitate the creatures on land? So that the sea is the stable of horse fishes, the stall of kine fishes, the sty of hog fishes, the kennel of dog fishes, and in all things the sea the ape of the land. Whence grows the ambergris in the sea? Which is not so hard to find where it is as what it is! Was not God the first shipwright and all the vessels on the sea descended from the loins (or the ribs rather) of Noah's Ark? Or else who durst be so bold with a few crooked boards nailed together, a stick standing upright and a rag tied to it, to adventure into the ocean? What loadstone first touched the loadstone? Or from first fell it in love with the north, rather affecting that cold climate than the pleasant east or fruitful south or west, how comes that stone to know more than men and find the way to land in a mist—— Indeed they are God's wonders and that wonder the greatest of all, who seeing them daily neither takes notice of them, admire at them, or is thankful for them."—Thomas Fuller: The Holy and Profane State.

I po not intend to write a treatise on the sea and sailing-ships; I could not if I would, for I have too little of that definite knowledge which goes to the compiling of such things; besides, it is always difficult in any case to be definite about what one feels very deeply, or to have a precise knowledge regarding anything which is a complete joy, a realization of some unuttered and but half understood desire of an entire lifetime.

It appears to me that there is in all of us a longing for something that we have never known in this life, and therefore could not be expected to miss, and yet which, if we do achieve, we are always conscious of finding in some way wanting in the perfection that some previous experience had led us to expect. It seems to me at times that our last life must have held moments of great sweetness or of intense potency, the memory of which clings to us. There is a garden that I know of where all the paths are edged with hedges of rosemary, a foot and a half in height; and now shaking out the light summer dresses of a year ago—here even, so far from land, the box from which I draw them out and the whole cabin is fragrant with it. is not all: clear as in a glass there rises before me the memory of the days in that garden, of looks and words, of all that was said and done.

as if in this way some little wind of circumstance shakes out of the garment of years, which lies fold upon fold around our souls, sudden instincts, memories, longings, which are alien to our present life.

From the gipsy days of long ago, the red-blooded, black-eyed, wild, free gipsy days, may come to one of us the longing for the open road, for the wide, wind-swept heath, the canopy of stars. To another—a mother of other days—the unquenchable longing for groping baby fingers, and the touch of soft lips at her breast. To another, the memory of a friendship, beside which all the comradeship offered seems cold and self-seeking. To another, a homesick longing for, and sympathy with, a country which is not his by birthright.

Back, and back, and back, these memories go, a twisted thread of many tints. The earth sways us, and the seasons sway us, in a manner for which our present life can give no account; the rise of sap in the spring, the falling leaf, the coming thunderstorm, it is all part of the days when the Spring meant loving and mating, and the Autumn was heavy and sad with the foreboding fears of the penurious Winter; when the thunder seemed a god from which we must dig holes in the ground to

hide ourselves, and so escape from the lightning, his javelin.

If—as I know most people declare—we have never existed as individuals before, from what very far away and forgotten ancestors must we have derived some of the instincts and desires which govern us? Back, so far as I, for one, can trace my progenitors on either side, there has never even been the proverbial boy that ran away to sea; never a single sailor of any sort among all those staid and Puritanical dwellers in the land-locked Midlands, from whom my instincts might be imagined to have been inherited. Indeed, from them I would naturally be supposed to have derived a veneration for the Ten Commandments, for a good horse, and for finely-matured, mellow port. But heredity has somehow played me false; I do not like to dwell on the idea of a jealous God; I cannot drink port, and the cut of a yacht or schooner, a straining sail, and a whistling wind through the shrouds are more to me than the best horse that was ever foaled.

Those who live at the seaside are deluded by the idea that they know the sea. They regard it as a sort of semi-divine and well-regulated scavenger, who at certain hours, punctual to the moment, rolls up over the ugly disordered yellow sands, and

sweeps off all the orange-peel, cabbage-leaves, and pieces of paper with which civilization has littered Storms come and go, but nothing really interferes with the avocations of this thoroughly domesticated element. The storms are romantic, of course; but so are the love-affairs of the housemaid, who still "turns out the rooms" with the most unfailing regularity. In some out-of-the-way places—on the wild western coast of Cornwall, for instance—the sea calls to us with its own voice, shows us its own heart, wild and free and turbulent; but there are few people there to see it. they come they soon set to work to smooth out the coast into an esplanade, to make straight the paths of the waves with breakwaters and sea-walls, and soothe them with a German band.

But still the sea-birds fly landwards, sometimes, indeed, far inland, till their wild, free notes penetrate through fold after fold of our dull conventionality and touch at last the old Viking spirit which lies deeply hidden, yet still alive in some of us; and the soul of the past, shaking its wings free of the dust of time, thrills with an old fellowship at the sound, and longs, wildly longs, to be off and far away.

[&]quot;To sail in a ship,

[&]quot;To leave this steady unendurable land,

"To leave the tiresome sameness of the streets, the sidewalks and the houses,

"To leave you, O you solid, motionless land, and entering a ship,

"To sail, and sail, and sail!"

"To sail," mark you! not merely to travel by steamer, pushing our way scornfully alike through storm and calm, in a smoke-belching abomination, which spurns the "great mother" scornfully to heel. But to sail—living and moving and having our being, with and by the winds and waves, fighting, but never scorning; her children, alike in love or strife.

"He!"—I once heard an old sailor ejaculate scornfully—" why, he knocked off going to sea to go in a steamer." There you have it all in a nutshell, the unfailing scorn of the man on a "windjammer" for the man on the steamship, amply reciprocated, I acknowledge; the bitter dislike of the man who understands Nature for the man who has merely overcome her.

"A long voyage," said the Doctor: "perfect quiet, no worry."

Charlotte did not reply. I saw her upper lip tighten, and noted the downward curve, then the quaint little lift at the left-hand corner; and I knew quite well the picture which crossed her mind.

"Deck-billiards and sports—amusements which failed utterly to amuse. Dinners with an endless succession of courses, differently named, but with precisely the same flavour; and an endless succession of people all as completely alike, except for their names, as the dishes on the menu. 'The fool!' said the turned-down mouth."

"But then, all men are the same, and after all he was bound to suggest something," added the quaintly lifted corner.

"If I have got to die like a rat in a hole, let it at least be my own hole," she said later: "I am certainly not benevolent enough to provide gratis, for a shipload of bored humanity, the sensation of a funeral at sea—'so touching, so romantic, my dear!' If I could meet death alone, in an open boat on an open sea, that would be another matter—but a steamer, pheugh! No, Crabsticks, I won't go to bed—you are—here to obey, and not to be obeyed."

The words might strike some people as harsh, particularly when they hear that I am what is called a "paid companion" to Mrs. Mildmay. But then they could not see the quaint, affectionate little pat on my cheek with which the words were accompanied. Nor could they know anything of the exceedingly one-sided arrangement by which

I was able to draw a handsome sum quarterly, for living in luxury with a woman of whom I was tremendously fond, and with whom I shared pretty well all the likes and dislikes of which I was pos-Charlotte is nearly as mad about the sea sessed. as I am. Really, we ought, by rights, both of us to have been the wives of the captains of tramp vessels, who are allowed to take their belongings to sea with them: but Charlotte has been married already—we don't often talk of it, she is really so dreadfully sorry that she can't be sorrier now her monster is dead, and, as some wit remarks, "any woman who marries twice does not deserve to have lost her first husband." While, as for me, I find it easier to go without than to put up with.

"I would love the sea, you know," said Charlotte, rather wistfully as I tucked her up and kissed her good-night: "simply love it. But—oh, I can't bear the life on a steamer. I went with poor Tom, you know."

Of course I knew. Some short-sighted doctor had recommended a long voyage to cure "poor Tom" of faults—which I doubt if eternity will be long enough for. I remember what Charlotte looked like when they arrived back. I don't think I ever saw a woman smile quite so persis-

tently. In fact, during the seven years of her married life she had kept every nerve so at the stretch, in her effort to maintain what the world calls a "stiff upper lip," that she had broken down completely now it was over. I always wondered how she could possibly go on living all those years with that monster, and wondered still more to find that now he was dead she appeared likely to follow him. Somehow all the spring seemed to have gone out of her life; it was as if she had no power of rebound left, as if she had been held up to the last only by pride and a sort of savage defiance of the world's pity: human nature is complex stuff.

I once visited a home for—well, for women who had made mistakes, and one was pointed out to me by the matron as having been particularly beautiful and audacious in her youth. She was working a machine, I remember, stitching an apparently endless seam of coarse neutral-tinted calico. When I spoke to her she quoted Scripture at some length, and she was resigned—so resigned that I felt that she must have been just at screaming-point. I talked to her a little; then, as I wished her good-bye, said, quite mechanically, that I supposed she was very happy in that "peaceful place."

"Yes, miss, it's peaceful, and I'm very thankful to all them as have been so kind to me, and to the Lord for all His mercies," she answered, as if repeating a well-learnt lesson. Then, with a sudden flash: "But bless my soul, there were a deal of life in them old days!"

I believe this is somehow the way with Charlotte. That monster raged at her, and bullied her, and made love to her, all by turns. She could never have felt a moment's security or peace. She was harried from pillar to post, always hanging on by the skin of her teeth to appearances; always acting a part; always trying to appear happy and at her ease, and keep her nervous eyes from that creature -and the way his flabby hand, even if it was empty, moved continually towards his flabby I say that word "creature," German mouth. fashion, in my throat, and twist my mouth all on one side as I utter it, for in that way only are my feelings somewhat expressed. Then suddenly the curtain rang down, the play was at an end, she was not as yet cast for any other: she had become so used to her part that the simple realities of life frightened her, unstrung as she was by the tragical farce that had run for seven long years. Hence the collapse! Poor Charlotte, she was like a marionette, whose every limb had been jerked

hither and thither by its owner, which suddenly dropped to the floor lies there unnoticed in a slack, dejected heap.

What has all this preamble to do with the sea? you may ask. Well, just everything as far as we were concerned; if Charlotte had not been ill, not precisely ill enough to need a nurse, but too ill to be alone, I should never have gone to live with her, much as I had always admired and liked her; nor would the Doctor have advised her to take a sea-trip. Nor would a sudden brilliant idea have come to me after I had been about an hour in bed that night, which sent me tiptoeing back into Charlotte's room, moving with infinite caution, though I knew well enough that she would not be asleep—to suggest, in a thrilling stage whisper:

"A sailing-ship!"

"What's that?" asked Charlotte, very wide-awake, as she always was when night came on: she looks lovely in bed; she has quantities of soft, dusky brown hair, which she parts in the middle, and which hangs in two thick plaits over her shoulders; and there is more colour in her face, and her hazel eyes are brighter than in the day-time. If any woman ought to have had a happy married life it is Charlotte; I cannot but feel this when I think what some of us look like in bed—

all armour-plated over with curling-pins, and with cold-cream on our faces!

- "But there aren't any now," she added, meaning sailing-ships, of course.
- "I know there are," I declared; "I will get the *Morning Post.*" So I did, and we scanned the shipping-lists eagerly, but there was no mention of sailing-ships there, nor among the pleasure-trips advertised at the end of the *Sphere*.
- "I knew it was too good to be true," sighed Charlotte wearily, as she sank back on her pillows. "They're as out of date as happiness."
- "Tommy-rot!" said I; "you are wrong, my dear, and I'll write to Cook to-morrow and prove it."

CHAPTER II

"Of his craft to reken wel his tides,
His stremes and his strandes him besides,
His herberwe, his mone and his lodemanage,
There was non swiche, from Hull unto Cartage
Hardy he was and wise, I undertake:
With many a tempest hadde his berd be shake,
He knew wel all the havens, so they were,
Fro Gotland, to the Cape de finistere,
And every creke in Bretagne and in Spaine."
CHAUCER.

To write to Cook! Through the medium of a prosaic scarlet pillar-box, to put oneself in communication with fairyland, with magicians every bit as powerful as those who provided flying trunks and carpets in the days of Hans Andersen and the "Arabian Nights." Nay, better, for Cook and Co. will transport you and your trunks separately—and with the greatest dexterity—from one end of the world to the other, and into any obscure corner of it where you may have the fancy to penetrate.

It costs money, of course; still, that is better than selling your soul to the devil, which was the

only way many such delights could be accomplished in the olden days. Besides, even without anything beyond a penny stamp and an opulent style of writing, they will send you catalogues galore; so that in fancy, sitting on your own chair at home, you may be transported across the Atlantic to Haiti; or, casually skirting the coasts of both Africa and Australia, steam past Fiji, to Tahiti, or voyage down the Nile to Khartoum, or visit the dead cities of South America, or the very much alive cities of North America. Latitude and longitude are as nothing to Cook and his minions, time and space are annihilated. He transports us to China, and centuries roll back like tapestry before our astounded eyes. There are no secrets left in the world. Cook has torn out the hearts of them all for us; from the monkey to the man,—a very short step considering the ages that we have been about it—it can all be traced by a ticket which will show us the sacred monkeys in the Indian Temples, and the less sacred—and certainly but little more civilized—natives of Australia's overgrown hobbledehoy, the Northern Territory. It is all as nothing to Cook; by swift, yet sweet degrees, over a path made smooth by smiling officials, he will lead us on, till in the Parisian of to-day we see the finished product of civilization, and sigh—" Is that all?"

Do you remember Hans Andersen's delightful little story of the old magician? He that the people "called Kribble Krabble, because that was his name," who sat one day looking at a drop of water through his magnifying-glass, and watching the thousands of little creatures in it, who were hopping about, biting and tearing and making love and destroying each other. In among these, being at last out of all patience with their goings on, he poured a drop of witch's blood, "the finest quality at ninepence a drop"—it would be dearer now, I expect, the sources of supply being so small—whereupon all the animalculæ turned pink and looked like naked men fighting each other.

"What have you got there?" asked another old conjurer, peeping over his shoulder.

"If you can guess what it is I will give it you," said Kribble Krabble; "but it is not easy to find out if you don't know beforehand." Wise magician! he realized that there are things which we can only find out because we do know them beforehand.

Then the other conjurer looked through the glass and saw what he thought was a city full of men, biting, fighting and struggling together, and allowing no one to live in peace; those that were on the top always endeavouring to tread the

others beneath their feet, and those which were at the bottom always trying to pull them down and destroy them.

"Anyone can tell you what that is," said the strange conjurer scornfully. "It is Paris, or some other large city—they are all alike. It is a great city."

"It is a drop of water," answered Kribble Krabble.

"It is only a drop of water, or a speck of sand or dust," says Cook. And he launches on it a little floating world, which he calls a steamer, or a train, or a camel, or an army of bearers, till we lose all sense of the greatness of the world and come to look on it altogether as a tinkering sort of little affair, not half big enough for people like us. While as to Cook himself we can imagine him speaking of "the world" with a sniff and a wink, expressive of the most profound scorn, which says, plainly enough, that if he has not yet started electric launches on the canals in Mars, it is only because there is not competition enough to make it worth his while. I wonder if anyone has ever written an ode to Cook—if not, it ought to be done. Alas! that I was not born under a rhyming planet!

Still, I think that the summit of his attainments was reached when he actually did find us a sailing-

ship which carried passengers. A "first-class clipper packet," with every convenience, including a bath out of which the water ran as soon as it was put in. Still, that was a minor drawback on a sailing-ship; one gets used very soon to being always dampish and never quite clean. It is really nothing—none of the drawbacks are, for the compensations are so manifold.

We were to go to Australia; we had no wish to go there, it never having struck either of us as being a desirable or interesting land. Indeed, all I had ever heard led me to picture it as a bald and barren country, inhabited mostly by sheep, who might have lived better anywhere else—in a less droughty land, for instance.

Still, it was a long way off, and it meant a long, long voyage, particularly the way we were going, where time seemed really no object. And then, it was all sea, so that for once we might be expected to have enough; but we never have had, and never shall have: we shall go on to the end of time like "Oliver" asking "for more." The journey was to take three months—more or less. There was to be no dallying with the land on the way: no running on shore at the Canary Isles, or Cape Town: no turning aside off our track to visit Natal: no nibbling at the very edge of the new

17

country, at Albany, or Perth. No, no stopping or any sort—unless we collided with an iceberg, or foundered—till we reached Adelaide.

"From three to four months, think of it! No letters or telegrams, no picture-postcards, no telephone bells. No bills, or rates, or taxes, no calls or callers," said Charlotte. "How heavenly! But—oh, Crabsticks! how poor Tom would have hated it. I could never have gone if——"

She did not finish her sentence, but I think she was really beginning to find out how many things there were left for her to do, that she for ever loved, and her monster had hated. He had always declared, for instance, that she looked "actressy" with her hair parted in the middle, and fluffed out softly either side of her brow, in the way that suited her so perfectly, insisting on her dressing it in a hard pompadour. It was only quite lately that she had ventured so far as to begin parting it, even at night. Some day, I thought, she will appear with parted hair in the broad daylight once more, and then I shall know that her emancipation from the wraith of that monster is complete; that she is beginning, as a nurse would say, "to feel her feet again."

When we told the Doctor that we were going to take his advice, and that Charlotte had deter

mined to try a long voyage, on a sailing-ship, he was aghast.

- "It will be frightfully cold, you will go so far south, and rough!"
- "I want roughness," said Charlotte; "it will be like a tonic, it will brace me up."
- "The food will be unutterable—those ships carry no refrigerating plant or anything; you will be fed on salt horse."
 - "I am going," declared his patient placidly.
- "You are not. Not with my consent, any-how."
 - "Well, without it."
 - "You will not!"
 - "I will!"

And they both stuck out their chins and glared: you never saw two more obstinate-looking people in the world. The Doctor was furious, but Charlotte smiled sweetly, for she knew that she was going to get her own way. I could hardly keep from applauding, it was so good to see her really alive again.

"Miss Adair, it you are party to this folly, I must warn you of the responsibility you are taking on your shoulders. You—you," and he almost shook his fist at me—me, mind you, and not his patient—"I wash my hands of you, I give up the

case, I'll have nothing more to do with it. But you—you—I warn you, Miss Adair."

"Crabsticks, leave the room," commanded Charlotte regally.

"I am paid to do as I am told," I replied with malicious meekness, and vanished, to her quick regret. For the Doctor, who was really an exceedingly nice person, when he was not over-agitated, took advantage of my absence to suggest that she should marry him as an alternative to "that mad voyage," or, if she still persisted in it, that it should be made possible for him to accompany her in the double capacity of Doctor and husband. I presume there was some talk of love, I believe there usually is in such matters, but Charlotte kept that to herself, only in telling me of the affair did she show the first trace I had seen for years, of her old delightful whimsicality.

"I suppose," she said, "that is what is called curing you with a hair of the dog that bit you."

"I like him," I declared stoutly. "I like men with no curves, all nice and square-cut and rough-hewn. Then he has a dimple in one cheek when he smiles, it is so odd."

"My dear child, do you expect me to marry a man for the sake of an odd dimple? It looks so utterly unprofessional, too."

"I don't expect you to marry anyone: you would be a fool if you did, after your first experience. No, Charlotte, I do really credit you with more sense than that."

"Yes—oh, of course—yes," she agreed, but still the reply was not so fervent as it might have been.

I am sure that voyage will be the most excellent bracer, both mental and physical.

CHAPTER III

"Down the world with Marna!
That's the life for me!
Wandering with the wandering wind,
Vagabond and unconfined;
Roving with the roving rain,
Its unboundaried domain!
Kith and kin of wander-kind—
Children of the sea."
RICHARD HOVEY.

"There she be," said the Glasgow cabby, pointing with his whip, as we craned out of the window. "You'd best get out here, I kin no get further;" and so, laden with handbags, rugs, and parcels we crawled out and stood in the mud and rain on the crowded quay, with our hearts in our very boots—no, through them, bang on the greasy pavement.

There was a long silence, then: "She looks very small," remarked Charlotte weakly.

It was the first breath of doubt that had escaped either of us. We had borne up bravely, lightheartedly, through weeks of packing: imagine two women collecting pocket-handkerchiefs and

underlinen enough to last them a possible four months, let alone other garments, both those suitable for the tropics, and those adaptable for the southern polar regions. We had met the fearful protestations of our relations with bland and smiling faces; mostly connections on Charlotte's side, I must own, who realized sadly that in the event of her demise the greater part of her fortune would go back to her husband's people. As for myself, I think everyone reflected, with a glow of peace, that there would be one poor relation less in the world for at least nine months—and who shall blame them?

But I am wandering, futilely retracing in memory those footsteps that have really come to a temporary ending on the dingy crowded Glasgow quay.

"Very small," repeated Charlotte dismally, "and very, very dirty." Really, having once given way, she seemed literally to revel in her woe. "A pig of a thing!"

"Nonsense, she is a clipper, a first-class clipper. Come along, and don't drivel!" I remarked with some asperity, as one of the many loafers seized my rugs and other impedimenta and guided us to the gangway. We stepped on to it, stood for a moment suspended, as it were, between heaven

and hell, then made the final plunge and stepped down on to the greasy, littered, and crowded deck.

"Well, and how do you like it so far?" said a voice at our elbow. There was malice in it, but we did not care. We cared for nothing except that here at last was someone we knew—we, who had sternly declined to have anyone to see us off.

"Is it to spy out the nakedness of the land ye have come?" I inquired, but the Doctor, for of course it was he, took no notice of me whatever.

"I warn you that you do not find us in the least discouraged," I went on, but still, I might have been both invisible and dumb, for he was looking down into Charlotte's eyes with—I am bound to own—absolutely no appearance of "I told you so," but only the deepest anxiety. Charlotte smiled back at him with a beautiful unconcern, though the remark she made about the charming weather was certainly inappropriate, for ever since we had set foot in Glasgow it had been raining, in a spiritless, dreary, yet set sort of fashion.

"It is not too late to change your mind even now; the boat does not start for an hour or more."

"It is far too late to change anything," replied

Charlotte, flushing, yet with a shrug of her shoulders that said, as plainly as words could have done, that she was not to be so easily deceived again. "I wonder where our cabin is, so that the man can deposit our belongings, and I can—sit down." Her voice was suddenly flat and toneless, and we could both see that she was trembling with mingled fatigue and excitement.

"Along that alley-way, number four, just to the right; take her along and see to her, Miss Adair, and I will go up to the galley, and try and get hold of a cup of tea." He had seen me all the time, then, the wretch!

"Oh, don't you trouble, Doctor Dare, the stewards---"

"There is only one, and he is old, very old, and even more drunk. Now—do take Mrs. Mildmay to her cabin and make her lie down, or she will be ill again." And it will be all your fault as usual. He did not add this, but anger seems quite capable of supplying its own wireless telegraphy, and if anyone was ever angry with the entire world—excepting of course and always Charlotte—it was Doctor Dare at that moment.

The two-berthed cabin was by no means bad, save that the bunks were of plain boards, no wire of any sort, while there were no mattresses or

However, there was not time blankets visible. then to make inquiries, for I could see that Charlotte was holding on to consciousness by the very skin of her teeth; so, tearing the comparatively dry middle out of our bundle of rugs and cushions, I made a sort of temporary shakedown on the lower bunk, and produced brandy and eau-de-Cologne from my bag, so that by the time the Doctor appeared with two substantial cups of unsubstantial-looking tea, his patient had some colour in her cheeks; it has always annoyed me to reflect what a beautiful woman Charlotte might have been drunk, or happy, or carefully rouged, for she looks so perfectly lovely when she is at all pink.

"Blankets—mattresses——?" she began tentatively, as she sipped her tea, of which the most that could be said was that it was hot and wet.

"At present in front of the galley fire, where I hope they will stay for several hours. Now, look here," the Doctor went on, balancing himself precariously on one of our many bags, "you've made up your mind to go this voyage, and unfortunately I have no power to stop you. It's an awful risk, and yet I know quite well that it may mean a new lease of life to you." He had begun by addressing us both, but now his speech was dis-

tinctly meant for Charlotte alone, no one ever feared for my life. "I've put you a case of wine on board, to supplement the chocolates that I am sure you have thought of for yourself; and another case of lime-juice and lemons and tinned fruits, which you had better not open till you are near the tropics; and some simple medicines, with full directions—they carry no doctor, you know."

"Then indeed we may pull through," remarked Charlotte; and Doctor Dare flushed—oddly enough with pleasure, for that woman has a way of uttering the sweetest words with a biting sarcasm, and contrariwise giving vent to the most cynical expression with a tone and glance that is like a caress. I do not know whether it is involuntary, or whether it carries with it a sort of general idea of "making up," but it is certainly very "taking," though I honestly believe that is the last thing Charlotte ever intends.

"I am going to explore," I said, and I slipped out of the cabin, though I hardly need have troubled to excuse myself; for the Doctor took no notice and Charlotte didn't care. I sometimes think that she doesn't really care a bit about me, though I know all the time that she does. That makes the difference. Nothing in life is so terrible, as to try to go on believing that someone does care for you,

knowing all the time, at the bottom of your heart, that it is, and always has been, a mere mirage; to sometimes think that they don't, knowing very well all the time that they do, is quite a different matter.

I found several damp and dreary females, evidently the relations of the Captain and his officers, gathered round the stove in the little saloon, who mechanically moved aside to leave room for me. made blindly for the open door. I was depressed, I own it, horribly depressed and horribly afraid; if it had not been for me Charlotte would never have thought of this voyage. From the very beginning of our friendship I had roused all her dormant instinct for the sea by my passionate love If she had been the flax, I had been the flame, and now what would come of it? If she died how could I ever face life, or death either, with the memory of the part I had taken in her fate? Then I pulled myself together, bracing back my shoulders—it is strange how the mere physical action seems to restore one's mental equilibrium. After all, even if the worst came, I had rescued Charlotte from the miserable lingering end of those who die because life holds nothing further to tempt them. I had swept her away from the cobwebby world of bitter memories and suffocating compas-

sion, to a world that was at least roughly vital and inwardly clean; life where the very disadvantages might prove advantages from their complete difference to anything that had gone before, at once as shocking and stimulating as a cold shower-bath.

I once heard of an epitaph that some miners in the West had put up over a mate: "He did his damndest, angels could do no more." It was no use puling. I, and I alone, bore the responsibility of this voyage on my shoulders. It should, it must, be a success. I would care so for Charlotte, hedge her so round at once with optimism, and good nursing, that she could not but get better. I would not even admit the possibility of failure.

The Captain, followed by a Customs House officer, brushed past me in the doorway, and wished me a hurried and bashful "Good-day." The deck was still as crowded as ever, and everyone appeared to be shouting at the tops of their voices. It was indeed like a scene from "Alice through the Looking Glass," save for the Glasgow accents. One group was gathering round a dried-up young Scotchman, who I guessed was to be one of the passengers. He seemed to have so many friends to see him off that they overflowed on to me, and asked me innumerable questions; or rather made

assertions with an interrogative voice, in true Scotch style.

"They tell me there's two leddies goin' the voyage," said one.

"An' one on 'em's sick," announced another. "I mistrust but the Captain will have her dyin' on him."

"Perhaps ye'll be a passenger yourself?" put in a third, with a jocular air that proclaimed it as a joke.

"Yes," I replied bluntly, and he stared; then recovering himself, fixed his eyes on my feet and remarked that he hoped I was not going to walk the wet decks "in them there thin pomps."

In London I had regarded them as my thickest boots, but I knew now that they were as paper to that persistent northern drizzle.

"My friend has very thick boots," I said meekly, feeling as if I was talking in French exercises.

"Then it's your friend as is the sick un. Well, it strikes me, young leddy, as yer verra rash."

The criticism roused me; "rash" I might be, but successful I would be. Still I could think of nothing more crushing to say than—"That remains to be seen," as I turned, and stepping gingerly over the sopping decks in what that creature chose to call my "pomps," made my way up to the foc's'le and

round the galley, then back by the starboard taffrail, only at that time I called it the "right side." The masts were shrouded in roughly-furled canvas, black with Glasgow, soot. The boat was small, certainly. Oddly enough after a while it seemed to grow and take on itself the proportion of the complete world, which for so many weeks it represented to us; dirty it was too without a doubt, and I shivered in the raw air, wondering how we could ever get dry or feel warm again.

It's no use dwelling on all this; a ship in harbour is no more like its real self than is a sailor on shore. Now that I have grown so to know and love sailing-ships, loving them not "by allowance," as Walt Whitman would say, but "with a personal love," it will always hurt me to see them in port, so draggled and defiled. They seem, indeed, to be the most perfect symbol of a soul, the nearest thing to a spirit that the clumsy hands of man have ever contrived; so that it becomes a sort of sacrilege to see them defiled by smoke, and the coming and going of many careless feet; with trailing pinions, prisoners there in a noisy, foul-smelling dock.

Things were no better when a fussy and ostentatious tug came and towed us down between the dripping, mist-shrouded banks of the Clyde, and

left us anchored at its mouth, waiting till the seafog should lift. Three days we waited, the worst three days, I believe, that I have ever spent in all my life. What Providence prevented me from hailing one of the many passing boats, and demanding that we should be taken home again, I do not know, for Charlotte had sunk back into her old mood of leaden acquiescence and would have agreed to anything I suggested. It never stopped raining, the little stove in the saloon smoked, so did the three other passengers, silently and persistently, in as hopeless a mood as ourselves, I suppose. Captain was worried and shy, the officers apparently terrified at the sight of a petticoat, and the steward But I will not write about it. After all. those few days were only like the ugly drop scene, before which we sit in a state of fevered exasperation waiting for—fairyland!

On the third day we were awaked, about six o'clock, by a sound of running feet and of many voices, and, dressing, I went out into the dimly-lighted saloon where there was usually hot coffee to be found at that hour, took a cup to Charlotte, and then, with mine in my hand, passed along the alley-way.

In those three days the ship had seemed like a dead thing. Lying there, swinging heavily on the

tide, while the men moved about her like ghosts, still wan and bleached from the shore; and seemingly oppressed, body and soul, by the fog. Now it was all changed. Some were hanging like bees along the great yards, loosing the sails and shaking out the blackened, sullen folds against a sky of grey and white, with patches of divinest blue; a sky alive with scudding clouds and sunshine, while on the deck more men were at the capstan, shifting the great yards on the main-mast, and shouting lustily with their brawny throats thrown back.

"Bel-lay-ay-ay!" roared the mate. It seemed to me like a comic opera come true.

"Shiver my timbers, avast and belay, And other queer things that the sailor-men say."

It was all there, every word of all that I have ever heard, or read, or felt, or "known before," as old Kribble Krabble would say. The curtain was up, the play begun.

"What is it all about?" asked Charlotte at my elbow, wrapped in a fur cloak with the hood drawn over her head. Then she too looked up and saw the men, immeasurably far away as it seemed, shaking down the sails against a sky over which the blue was spreading in one great sea of pure cobalt. "O-h-h!"

"It's life," I said-" life !"

"It's heaven," breathed Charlotte, her eyes all pupils, and her breath coming quickly.

"It will be if you don't put on something more in the way of clothing," I responded tartly; for I had caught sight of a hem of white beneath the edge of her cloak; "go and get dressed at once!"

"What nonsense! I am quite warm. I must—look at those men, and smell the wind, all sweet with sea scent. I— Oh, Captain, are we really off at last?"

"At last; and we'll get a fair start if only this weather holds. You're not afraid of a bit of a tossing, I suppose?"

"Not I!" Nor I, indeed. We cared for nothing—we were fey. It all seemed too good to be true, that we were off, off at last, on this ship of our desire.

"Charlotte, you hussy! Do you know that there's at least six inches of your nightgown showing, and as much again of accordion-pleated, suspenderless stocking? The Captain——"

"Yes, you noticed the difference, didn't you?" she put in, with her deplorable habit of breaking into my sentences, and ending them to her own liking. "He's cast his shore slough, too. He was just a man before; now he's that immeasurably superior person, a sailor."

"For Heaven's sake, go and dress. Here's the first officer: he'll die if he sees you. Go—go." And she went to make her appearance at breakfast in the saloon for the first time, and—with her hair parted in the middle.

"It is less trouble to do," she explained later, and it needs no pads this way."

- "Poor Doctor Dare!"
- "Why—in the name of goodness why?"
- "Oh, because---"
 - "Because what?"
- "Oh, just because !—what did you say to him at the last, Charlotte?"
 - "Nothing."
 - "He was holding your hand."
- "He was feeling my pulse." She was lying back in her long chair on the main-deck gazing upwards at the blue sky crossed by the web of ropes, with rather a tender little smile on her face; then her expression changed, and her mouth hardened, and I knew that she was thinking back, too far back—far, far back, beyond that comically dreary day at Glasgow, to days that were all dreary, and not the very least bit comical. We can most of us get a little amusement out of our own follies: it is the follies of those we love, or have loved, that really hurt.

"Child—child," I said, "you must learn the gentle art of forgetting; it is the only healing power in all the world for most of us."

"Such scars-"

"Don't touch them, or look at them. Don't speak of them, even to your own soul. Word upon word, line upon line. Learn it now, from the sky and the sea, from every scrap of canvas and every rope, and the new faces in this new world—learn it now, Charlotte, that art of arts."

"To remember to forget?" she queried with gentle sarcasm.

But I was not to be put off. "Yes," I answered stoutly, "to remember to forget; till it becomes a habit and needs no remembering. Here, if ever, voyaging—"

"In this ship of healing—over the ocean of oblivion; let it be a bargain. Study to be amiable, Crabsticks, not to snap me up, or order me about more than you can possibly help. And I will promise to live in the present, to never speak of the past, to forget that this dog of a world ever had a bad name; to be, from morn till eve, pleased with a trifle, tickled with a straw, ignoring its more fearsome attribute of showing which way the wind blows. But don't blame me if I'm silly; when one has got into a habit of sadness one can

only escape it by acquiring a temporary mood of silliness in exchange. Let's be, really and truly, foolishly, nonsensically, beautifully happy, my Crabsticks, and look on any discomfort or hardship only as a joke, part of the experience."

"Right," said I, "let's shake hands on it." And we did—to the undisguised astonishment of the young, afore-mentioned Scotch passenger, who stopped in his promenade to regard us with a blighted eye, dimmed by the disillusions of some three-and-twenty years.

The anchor was being weighed when we got on deck after breakfast, the men tramping cheerily round the capstan, though they did not seem even yet to have quite gathered spirit enough for a real chanty, and hove her short with a—"Heave, and she comes—Heave, and break her out—Heave, and she must—Heave, and she goes!" All tuneful enough in the clear morning air.

"Click, click," went the pawls; and slowly, like a sluggish sea-serpent, heavy with mud, over came the anchor, and was made fast on to the cathead—"catted" they call it.

The ship has hitherto seemed a medley of men, but thanks to the bos'n, who is overflowing with information, I am at last beginning to know them. First, there is the bos'n himself, of course, then

the Captain, "the Old Man," as they call him; the three officers: "Sails," the sail-maker; "Chips," the carpenter; and the cook, always known as the "Doctor" on sailing-ships; the steward and "the boy," twelve A.B.'s, and six ordinary seamen.

By noon we were well clear of the mouth of the Clyde, and put about, making for the North of Ireland. I had often enough seen a big ship put about, but it's quite a different affair being on one. Everybody seems to be yelling at the top of their voices, and the excitement is intense. Almost every man on board must have joined in the manœuvre innumerable times, yet it always seems to inspire them with a sort of frantic delight, and fear lest it should fail, which can never grow less. I know I shouted, so did Charlotte. And I know that to the end of time I always shall shout, for sheer joy and the fulness of life, when the great yards begin to swing and the water churns around us, and the heart of the ship beats high.

Before going about all the traces were taken off the pins and carefully coiled on deck, so that they might run clear. Then the spanker boom, the boom of the big fore and aft sail on the mizzen, was hauled amidships.

There was a moment's breath. The helm was

eased down; everyone was a-gaze in their right place. Then, "Helm's alee!" bellowed the officer on duty, and the fore and head sheets were let go and overhauled; and the wind spilled from the main-sail.

"Raise tacks and sheets!" And the main-sail was hauled and the fore-tack let go; then came the order, "Main-sail haul! Ye—ho—o-o-haul!" and the great yards swung round, while with short, sharp cries, indicative of extreme haste, the slack of the braces was hauled in, and the after-yards braced up and belayed.

The ship was alive with the weirdest sounds and the tramp of many men; all was noise and movement and life, while the heavy blocks banged wildly on the deck.

Then the fore-yards were trimmed, and the fore-tack and main-tack boarded—that is, the tack, or corner of the sail reaching to windward, was made fast—and the bow-lines hauled out, some of the men, as they cleared the decks and coiled the ropes afresh, starting a song—my first real deep-sea chanty:

"Ye ho, Piper, watch her how she goes! Loose the sheet and let her rip—
We're the boys to pull her through.
See her rolling, rolling home.
She's the gal ter go.
Home again in ninety days,
From Cal—i—for—ni—o."

CHAPTER IV

"But the mere fact of it being a tramp ship gave us many comforts; we could cut about with the men and officers, stay in the wheel-house, discuss all manner of things, and really be a little at sea. And truly there is nothing else. I had literally forgotten what happiness was, and the full mind—full of external and physical things, not full of cares and labours and rot about a fellow's behaviour. My heart literally sang: I truly care for nothing so much as that."—R. L. STEVENSON.

For two whole days the wind held fair, and the white clouds bowled across the blue sky—battalions of them—in such a light-hearted sort of way that it seemed as if they were all too busy with their own affairs to conspire together for rain, excepting at night, when there were several heavy downpours that washed most of the soot out of the sails. They are so big, those sails, and there are so many of them, and there is something so confident, so debonair in their port, that one seems to swell to a sort of pride and self-confidence in sympathy with them: no one could snub me now, not even with the help of a single eyeglass, a weapon that usually has an absolutely

benumbing effect. Hitherto I have been writing in the past tense, and of the past, but now I have reached this, the morning of the third day in the open sea, and with the swelling dignity of the great sails inspiring me, I will, for the future onward, write, as I live, in the present.

They have been such odd days; the whole life is odd, the people are odd, but oddest of all is the food. We have lived upon hash, literally lived upon it—dry hash and wet hash and semi-demi-It is all really mince, but on board ship it is known as hash. There have also been a few fresh vegetables-already, I believe, come to an end—and bread of an extraordinarily satisfying consistency. The food is bad, but the cooking is worse: it is the merest savaging of the material, such as it is. Oh! I forgot the porridge, which is lumpy, and smoky, and everything that porridge ought not to be; for though the Captain and officers and many of the crew are Scotch, the cook is an Irishman who can do no more than boil a potato, and that but moderately well. I do not know if God directly supplies the food met with on a sailing-ship—I doubt it; but there is no doubt that the devil did supply the cook on this one. Perhaps that is why he is such a good fellow apart from his cooking.

Charlotte and I have been feeding on delicacies of our own providing—beef jelly, Bovril, and suchlike; but to-day at breakfast she demanded dry hash, and eat some of it too, seemingly not in the least put out by the lumps of gristle and fat. Charlotte! Charlotte, who could hardly look at the wing of a partridge. I really am beginning to believe that some men are right in beating their wives; they need something invigorating. For five—no, six—nights my invalid has slept on hard boards inadequately covered by a lumpy The ship has been jerking about, in a way that makes even me feel like a rat being badly shaken by a terrier. We have had no hot water to wash in save what I could carry all along that heaving deck from the galley. We have been buffeted by the winds and wet by the sea, and very inadequately dried by the saloon stove, above which a medley of sea-boots and steaming garments are perennially hung. And yet after all this she could actually face hash, dry hash, at eight in the morning, my ethereal Charlotte! She slipped down on the wet deck to-day, when I was too far away up on the poop-deck to run to her help. She is really deplorably weak, and though she says nothing, I know that she is all the time, when not in her long chair, bracing every muscle

to the effort of keeping erect and adapting herself to the roll of the ship.

No one ran to pick her up! There were two men busy with the main-top braces—I have already learnt that much—quite near, but they only grinned, while the mate, who was leaning over the taffrail, turned half round and remarked: "Not hurt, eh." It was not even an interrogation; he seemed to take it for granted, almost as if no one could possibly be hurt by the carryings-on of that ship.

"No-o," answered Charlotte; and I am sure she must have added—"Thank you for nothing," as, after one resproachful glance at the mate's back, she picked herself up and vanished, rather haltingly, down the alley-way.

"The brute!" I ejaculated fiercely; then suddenly realized that she had picked herself up! Do you understand—that is what I had been hoping and praying for all the time? It is really never any good helping people to their feet; we may do it again and again, and again and again, and down they go. But let them once pick themselves up, ever so haltingly, ever so feebly, and then, stagger as they may, they will yet in all probability remain upright.

Presently I went to Charlotte—it really spoke

worlds for my self-control that I did not go at once, for I have a silly mania for trying to drag people to their feet—and found her lying in her bunk with her head buried in her pillow, sobbing wildly, with the utter abandonment of a woman who has been keeping a stiff upper lip for years. I had never seen her cry before, and now it seemed like the breaking of a long and terrifying drought.

After a while I began to be afraid she was hurt by her fall, though I might have known better, for she is not the sort to cry with mere pain.

"What is it, Charlotte?"

No answer—only more sobs.

" Are you hurt?"

Still no answer. I began to lose patience; I always do when I am anxious, and I hate myself for it afterwards.

"Charlotte, don't be hysterical; where are you hurt? What is it?"

"I'm not hysterical. I'm o-o-only—amused."

"Oh! did you hurt yourself?"

"Yes." There was some manœuvring with a handkerchief, and the figure on the bunk rolled over and surveyed me shamefacedly, with red and swollen eyes.

- "Oh, Charlotte, don't be an ass! Where are you hurt?"
 - "My elbow and my knee—and my pride."
 - "But why?"
- "Because I have been such a silly, weak idiot, Crabsticks. I fell over when the wretched ship rolled."
 - "But you couldn't help that."
- "I could help the reason for it." Here she sat up in the bunk and rolled her handkerchief savagely into a hard ball. "I could help letting myself go, and letting myself go, and letting myself go, till I had no more strength left; as though I thought I was going to fade away out of life, like a heroine in a popular novel. But I didn't-I did nothing romantic—I just tumbled down! There was nothing heroic in that. And then I suddenly saw what a fool I had been, and—I cried," she added rather flatly, while I stared at her in amazement. Was this the woman who had bolstered up the reputation of a weak and brutal man through seven long years, who had shown the patience of Job, and the wisdom of the serpent, and the gentleness of the dove; who had endured untold horrors, with a strength that had at times appeared to me almost uncanny in such a frail creature?
 - "Don't cry," I said feebly.

"It's only because — Oh! Crabsticks, do you see, it is only because it is so good to be able to realize that it has all been a bad dream. Like one of those dreams where one is threatened with something, and horribly afraid and yet cannot move. I have moved at last—I have awakened. I picked myself up—the mate would have done it if the others had not been there; and they would have done it if he hadn't been there, but I am glad they didn't."

"Do you know, they are awfully and horribly afraid of us. Oh, Charlotte, you do look so nice, all bleary and teary, but nice and human, not a bit resigned any more. What was I saying?—oh, I know: they are afraid we shall find out that they have a soft side and take advantage of it. Did you notice that there was a cushion in your place at breakfast this morning? And that same mate was whistling so hard and looking so persistently the other way when you came in that I am sure he put it there."

"There is the Captain," said Charlotte, the forefinger of the right hand laid gently on the forefinger of the left, showing that she meant to tick them all off—"there is the Captain, who is very much afraid of a woman, and not at all afraid of a storm, which sounds contradictory, but is yet true. And there is the mate, who is afraid of nothing,

except of seeming to own anything in the way of a heart; and there is the second mate, who is a muscular muff; and then the Third—can you make anything of the Third?"

"Nothing beyond the fact that he chews and spits all day. Then there are the passengers."

"They," said Charlotte, with supreme scorn, "are passengers and nothing more: they have no individuality."

"That Lancashire boy has---"

"I have met them all before; but the sailors are all new, though old as the world. They are the types that might have sailed with Barentz, with Drake, with Frobisher. They seem to regard steamships as playthings, mere silly luxuries, and the men who are on them not as sailors at all."

She was right; only to-day the Captain had asked me if I had ever been a long voyage before, and I replied that I had been to India, and once to America, on a steamer.

"Oh, a steamer! then you no ken the sea." It was said quite simply, but he was right: we know very little of anything to which we can rise superior. Here in this hand-to-hand tussle with the elements there is that good-fellowship and understanding which can only be found between foes that are fairly matched. And then, the Captain with his ship is

not like a man with a machine; he is like a man with a wife whom he loves—jealous for her good fame, proud of her strength and her beauty, all aglow at a word of praise. "She" he calls her, always with a sort of ardour, with a note of real personal feeling in his voice. I wonder why people seem to regard the Irish as being of a more romantic nature than the Scotch; they may indeed have the sentiment, but the more Northern nation have the real passion.

"She," says the Captain, "is a bit contrary-like when the weather's fair, as it is now, but you should see her under the main upper top-sail in a gale o' wind—she'd fair amaze you." He is like Louis Stevenson's famous Captain Wicks, knowing his beloved barque as that other Captain did his schooner. "He could take her through a Scotch reel," says Stevenson; "felt her mouth and divined her temper, like a rider with a horse; she in turn recognizing her master and following his wishes like a dog." But Captain Wicks could not manage a square-sailed ship, "all blooming pocket-hand-kerchiefs," he called them, and as they are by far the most difficult to handle, our skipper stands superior.

This is a barque; that is, her fore-mast and mainmast are square-rigged like a ship, but her mizzen

is fore-and-aft rigged. Once she was a full-rigged ship, but they sheared her down to a barque, "and she seems never to have got over it," says the Captain: "I reckon her feelings were kind of hurt."

The clouds are gathering thick and grey, the wind is rising, and soon, I can see it, we shall have a taste of what "she" can do.

CHAPTER V

"The frantic wind
Shrieked round us, and our cheeks grew numb, then warm,
Until we felt our souls, no more confined,
Mix with the waves, and strain against the storm."
PHILIP BOURKE MARSTON.

We are racing down the West Coast of Ireland, out of sight of land. Overhead, ever since dawn, the clouds have been rolling up in massed battalions of darkness. All their gaiety is gone, and they seem possessed of one set purpose, while there is something relentless in their sullen, lowering brows. Just after tea the wind suddenly shifted from the east to the south, gathered itself together, and sprang. The watch from below was called on deck, that we might tack as quickly as possible to the westward and take in the fore top-gallant, the main top-gallant, and fore upper-topsail.

The great yards swung slowly round, among the wild shouts of the men at the braces. "Ye ho-o-o-o! Ye hoy-oy-oy! Over she comes!" penetrated with the ringing "Belay-ay!" of the mate. Amidst the twanging shrieks of the sheets,

the halliards, the braces, and stays and lifts, the hundred and one ropes all wailing together like the strings of some monster harp, and the agonized groaning of the yards, the shipthat ship that had seemed so small, so futile, drooping in the Glasgow docks, and had now grown to be so great a world—was put about. For a long moment she hovered trembling, shuddering, from bow to stern, "in stays" as the sailors call it; then swung slowly round on the starboard tack. Sometimes, they say, these square-rigged craft may not have way enough on them to come round when they are luffed, and will stick there, with their "nose in the wind," the fore and aft sails shivering and the square sails all unfilled. But "she" is not of this breed; indeed, as she answered to the helm, she seemed to brace every nerve and gather herself together as a thoroughbred does for a jump. Quivering there "in stays," she was like a sentient human being of finest fibre. Who could have believed that only a few days before she had been trolloping about so helplessly, hideously, at the mouth of the Clyde?

Up on the poop-deck Charlotte and I squatted on a heap of sailcloth, wrapped to our noses in fur, for it had turned bitterly cold; and hanging on as best we could to the deck, which seemed to fall

away from us as sheer as a wall. The blood went coursing like wine through my veins, and I felt alive, alive from head to foot, as I had never been before. It seemed a really terrific storm to me, and the sense of my own bravery and delight in it was such that the calmness of that third officer, whose watch it was, and who walked up and down spitting and chewing as stolidly as ever, annoyed me beyond all words.

"Did you ever see anyone so impertinent?" asked Charlotte indignantly.

"To whom—to what?"

"Why, to the storm," she answered, "and to us too; he has no business to discount our first storm in such a manner, the wretch! But perhaps after all it is only the calmness of despair," she added hopefully, feeling, I know, exactly as I did.

We had begun by sitting cross-legged, like tailors, on the pile of sailcloth, but were now clinging on with feet as well as hands, while I could feel my toes curl within my boots in their effort to grasp the wet and slippery deck. Suddenly, to our unbounded amazement, the apparently unobservant mate rushed at us, caught our rug-enveloped feet and legs in his hands, and threw us back on the sailcloth helpless as mummies in our wrappings. Of course I thought he was mad, and in one

second I seemed to recollect all that I ever heard or read about lunatics and the way to manage them; found myself even hesitating between firmness and humouring. Then as I lay there on my back, all twisted up—for he had, in some mysterious manner, thrown me with a turn which landed me curled like a fried whiting—and gazed up in his face, wondering if it was homicidal, I caught sight of a great curved, green wave which had arched its head high above the taffrail, and now broke in a greedy rush of water round our island of refuge, and realized from what a wetting we had been saved.

"Thank you," I said, jerking myself into a more decorous position, and—"Thank you," said Charlotte, curling herself round a little more comfortably, but otherwise not attempting to move.

"Don't mention it," replied the Third, retreating to the taffrail and expectorating viciously, as though to say: "If they think that's an attention, if they take that for softness, they're mistaken, so there!"

I am sitting up in my bunk, writing; the waves are beating against the closed port-holes, for we are on the weather side. At each roll of the ship, our skirts, which are hung on pegs, swing out straight in a ghostly fashion, the wild guttering of

my candle adding to the general uncanniness. I have just peered over into the lower berth, and seen that Charlotte is sleeping very peacefully, her hands folded on her heart in a curiously infantile fashion. It seems strange that the women who have passed through the deepest waters so often retain a peculiar youthfulness, both of appearance and attitude, while people who are perpetually churning themselves into furies over trifles become the victims of untold criss-cross lines and jerky gestures; though perhaps it is only, after all, that the deepest natures trust themselves to the deepest waters, and that the very depth in some manner upholds them.

The wind among the rigging is singing the maddest refrain, and the spectres masquerading in our skirts are dancing to it. It is a melody all in the minor key; there is a merry, mad melancholy about it. You will say these terms contradict each other, but merry it certainly is, melancholy, and mad—quite mad. If Ophelia ever played on harp or lute, it would be such a tune as this. I cannot believe that it is only the motion of the air through wires and ropes, for I seem almost to see visionary white hands and curving wrists.

There, outside, are the great waves clamouring and the wind crying. Far away now to the East

is Ireland, and far away to the West is America; and here are we, no more than a chip, a shred, an autumn leaf tossing alone on this infinite waste of The ship that a little while back had appeared so big and important suddenly begins to dwindle. A plank or two, no more, between us and eternity and the company of the thousand and one men who have met their death at sea; who know so much more of it than ever we can know, till we have paid our last debt to freedom. It is difficult to understand how anyone who goes down to the sea in ships can be afraid any more; by the very act of stepping across that narrow gangway one seems to have met Death half-way, to have offered life on one's outstretched palm for him to take or leave.

CHAPTER VI

"——like the Pontic Sea, whose icy current and compulsive course ne'er feels returning ebb, but keeps due on to the Propontic and the Hellespont."—OTHELLO.

THE wind, which has blown steadily for days, has quite dropped. Soon we would catch the northeast trades, if we could only get a little farther; but now, though every scrap of sail is set, and we tack persistently, we seem to make next to no progress. It is the dullest, flattest, greyest day I have ever seen, both the sea and sky appearing like an opaque neutral tint of colour-wash, laid on with a Titanic brush.

The Captain and mate have been chatting with us on the poop-deck; at last they seem to realize that we have really no designs on them, and will soon, as Charlotte says, "eat out of our hand"—after all, as we are the first women passengers that the ship has ever carried, a certain mistrust of us was but natural. Once I travelled for nearly three weeks on a sugar-boat which had never

carried any passengers of any sort before, and noticed the same guarded demeanour in both Captain and officers, though, being a steamer, I suppose they were in some way more adaptable, and so got over their suspicion the sooner. was a nice boat and a nice voyage, save for the cockroaches. They swarmed on my cabin walls, so that if I swept the panelling with my hand I dislodged dozens of them. I would turn down the blankets on my bunk before I got into it, and sweep them out by the hundreds, only to awake again and again in the night to brush them off my face or shake them out of my hair. For a few days I was in a state of hopeless terror, till quite suddenly I grew used to them, and when I shipped on to an Ocean Liner, could not realize for a while what was missing, though it was what, as children, we used to call "a good miss."

We are learning the names of all the sails and tackle, and life really does not seem long enough for all we want to know. I have thrown my dictionary overboard, because it told me that a "sheet" is a sail, and I therefore lost all faith in it, a sheet being the chain with which the sails are secured. On the fore and main mast—beginning from the bottom—comes the fore-yard, carrying the fore-sail; the lower fore top-sail yard and its sail;

the upper fore top-sail yard and sail; the lower fore top-gallant, the upper fore top-gallant, and the royal. Attached to either end of the yards, and made fast to the mast, a little higher up are the lifts; before them, all along the yard, the foot-ropes, on which the men stand to work the sails. From the junction of the lifts with the mast, the halliards run to the main-deck, and it is by these that the yards are shifted. The sails and yards of the main-mast are much the same as those on the fore, the mizzen being alone fore-and-aft rigged. Besides this, the masts themselves are supported by innumerable stays and back-stays, each with a name of its own—the fore preventerstay, the fore-stay, fore top-mast-stay, inner jibstay, outer jib-stay, fore top-gallant-stay, flying jib-stay, fore royal-stay, fore top-mast back-stay, fore top-gallant back-stay, and the fore royal backstay appertaining to the fore-mast alone; the main-stays being the same excepting for the jibstays. Then there are innumerable other curiously-named appurtenances of the ship, such as the martingale and the dolphin-striker, the gammoning, the futtock shrouds, the lubber holes, the stirrups, the trusses, the whiskers, the vangs, the bumpkins.

At first it seemed all an absolute blurr, clipped,

as all such names are by the sailors, into an unintelligible jargon. But very quickly, more quickly than I have ever learnt anything else in my life, I have begun to evolve a sort of working knowledge of it all, first learning the sails and the standing rigging, then the running gear and all the other minor tackle. After all, none of it is quite new to me, for during my whole life I have fed greedily on books about the sea, and the lives of sailors, and sea plays and songs. And have listened greedily to sailors' talk, so that all the names are in a way familiar to me, and fit into their proper places with an almost uncanny facility, nothing striking me as strange or alien; indeed, already it seems to me as if I have been months at sea. I begin to adapt my gait as if to the roll of the ship, and soon I shall be swearing, good round mouth-filling oaths.

We are now, roughly speaking, in latitude 42° north and longitude 17° west, westward of Cape Finisterre and north-east of the Azores. The wind has freshened a little, but there is still a heavy monotonous swell from the west, which, fighting against the north-easterly breeze, shakes the sails in a melancholy fashion against the rigging, fretting and wearing them far more than any gale could have done. Porpoises have been

gambolling round the ship, very close, evidently quite undisturbed by our quiet progress, and just now a solitary wild-duck has passed our bows.

How strange to think what a distance this unwilling little pilgrim must have travelled! The thought seemed to fascinate Charlotte, and she fetched our big atlas, which is ever a book of mystery and wonder and endless delight to us both, and with the Captain peering over her shoulder tried to trace out his probable flight.

"There is Cape Finisterre, the nearest point of land," she said, with her long, white forefinger moving tentatively over the page—as it had moved so often when we had planned out all the endless voyages that we would take together—"and the Minho River, and the Tambre River, and lots of other smaller rivers, there on the West Coast of Spain."

"And all near on four hundred miles away," put in the Captain. "Maybe he has been swept out to sea by this very wind that we are catching now; it must have been blowing a hurricane, from the condition of the glass, and this is only the tail-end of it."

It seemed dreadful to think—we have time to think now, and oddly enough thought has grown to be far more to us than books, here, where we

have, as Charles Lamb says, "come in for our estates in time"—of that solitary voyage, still so far from its completion; a voyage doubly terrible to a creature so accustomed to travelling among many of its own kind, cleaving the air in a cunning wedge of fellowship.

"The sea is thick with currents here," went on the Captain, "and there is one which, if he crosses it, may whirl him along, right up past France to the West of Ireland; and even there he may be caught by yet another that will drift him down again, past where we met him now and right through the Straits of Gibraltar. Best get that spanker set, eh, Mr. Macgregor?" And the first mate, who had been leaning over the side of Charlotte's chair, moved off to get his watch together, while the Captain strolled aft towards the wheel.

"There are the Azores—the Western Isles," mused Charlotte dreamily. "If only he could lift himself up from the water, and shake out those little glossy brown wings of his, the wind would help him, and there are shady, rush-fringed streams there, and comrades and food and drink. What names! They are like a melody—Flores, Fayal, San Miguel, Santa Maria, Graciosa, Terceira."

"There is the Peak of Pico, rising so high, a veritable beacon of hope, and there are many smooth, sky-reflecting lakes and many streams. While at San Miguel there are deep, sky-reflecting lakes, and wildfowl in plenty to bid the little pilgrim welcome—the quail, the crane, the sandling, the heron, the bittern; and at certain seasons the curlew, the woodcock, the snipe, the kingfisher, the water-rail; and little streams all running whispering down to the lakes and from the lakes to the sea."

"Don't talk of it, Charlotte—I wish I could forget it. Poor wee thing, it looked so alone in all this immensity of sea, so pathetically out of focus. And yet a living creature, and in some way so immeasurably superior to the mere lifeless forces of which it is the sport. It makes one realize it all somehow."

"Our loneliness and our littleness?"

"Yes—and that we must seem just as small in the eye of God, just as incapable of contending, really, with all the dogged pressure of Nature. It seems impossible that He could judge His people very hardly—we see the way they drift, but He sees all the winds and currents of circumstance, of disposition, of temperament that sends them astray, helpless as that wild-duck in mid-ocean."

We are near the Azores now, a day later, so near that there is every chance that we may sight them. How can people look on the ocean as a vast, uneventful waste of water, destitute alike of historical and romantic interest? Some day I would like to make a chart of the great seas, and mark it, as others are marked, by latitude and longitude, yet not widely dotted with islands, as they are, but close, close, with the battles that have been fought on them against legitimate foes, against pirates, against storm and fire, mutiny and wreckage; mark them with the almost unnumbered lives of noble men who lie "full fathom five" in their depths.

Almost here where we now are did Sir Humphrey Gilbert's tiny ship, the Squirrel, of not ten tons, disappear in a storm which raged round these islands. The commander of his companion ship, the Golden Hind, of forty tons burden, tells the tale, saying: "The frigate were near cast away" (in the earlier part of the day), "oppressed by waves, yet at that time recovered; and giving forth signs of joy, the General—Sir Humphrey Gilbert—sitting abaft with a book in his hand, cried out to us in the Hind, so oft as we did approach within hearing: 'We are as near to Heaven by sea as by land.' Reiterating the same

speech, well beseeming a soldier, resolute in Jesus Christ, as I can testify he was."

The Delight, the Admiral ship of the little fleet, which had started off so bravely, had been lost near Newfoundland, the disaster being heralded, as some declared, "by strange voices the night before, which scared many from the helm, and with her had gone down the talented young scholar and poet, Stephen Parmenius, Captain Maurice Brown, and many other brave men, while the Golden Hind herself had been in the most dire distress in the Bay of St. Lawrence, battling with the elements and short of both food and water. But by the time the Azores were reached the danger seemed well-nigh over; and there only remained for the proud, self-reliant man, quickly jealous of fame, to recount to his Royal Mistress the discoveries he had made and the Colonies he had founded. Just a little while before he had been planning another great expedition, and when asked how he hoped to meet the expenses had replied: "Leave that to me. ask a penny of no man; I will bring good tidings to her Majesty, who will be so gracious as to lend me ten thousand pounds;" at the same time thanking God for all he had seen. But, alas! the good tidings—so little in truth, being but the taking

of St. John and the settlement of Newfoundland—were left to honest Captain Haynes to recount, the only one who brought his boat home in safety. "Here lies Humphrey Gilbert," I would put on my new ocean chart, "and many high hopes and brave endeavours."

Haynes seems to have been a quaintly conscientious biographer, and, much as he admired Sir Humphrey, he did not attempt to gloss over his faults of arrogance and pride; though at the end of the narrative, through which his chagrin at the very little really achieved is plainly shown, he adds this, to my mind, perfect passage:

"But such is the infinite mercy of God, who from every evil deriveth good. For, besides that fruit may grow, in time, of our travelling into the North-West lands, the crosses, turmoils, and afflictions, both in the preparation and execution of this voyage, did correct the intemperate humours which were before noted to be in this gentleman, and made unsavoury and less delightful his other manifold virtues. Then as he was refined and made nearer drawing unto the image of God, so it pleased the Divine Will to resume him unto Himself, whither both his and every other high and noble mind have always aspired."

65

Is it the coming of steam that has made man so cock-sure, so confident in his ability to do without God? In the old days no ship ever started to sea without prayers and often enough the blessing of a priest; in most of them there were prayers on deck each day, while the sense of the nearness and general approachableness of the Divinity was shown by the fact that God and Christ, the Virgin and Saints were called upon at any time of stress or peril, and vows made to them.

We read of the ancient Cabot going on board the Bona Esperanza, the Edwara Bonaventura, and the Bona Confidentia—fitted out by the publicspirited London merchants, and placed under the command of Chancellor and Willoughby—as they lay in Greenwich dock, all ready to start on their famous voyage in search of the North-West Passage, to wish the adventurers God-speed, giving gifts to the sailors, and bidding them pray for the success of the undertaking, while commending them "to the governance of God Almighty." It was all so different somehow from what it is in these days. Religion was more intolerant, but surely it was more vital. People seem now to treat God as they treat the dead, almost as if they were criminal in disturbing for a moment the routine of a day's work or pleasure,

as if there was something indecent about solemnity of any sort. Alas! against the shores of Lapland there would be another mark on my chart, showing where all those gallant adventurers perished of cold and hunger; saving only Chancellor himself, who escaped through Russia from Archangel in a sledge, a journey of some one thousand five hundred miles.

The voyages these early explorers took seem almost incredible when we remember the smallness of the vessels in which they sailed. Martin Frobisher set out to discover the North-West Passage with three ships, none over thirty-five ton. Magellan's largest vessel was only one hundred and fifty ton, though that was a monster indeed to the four ships with which Columbus made his last voyage—exploring the American coast from Cape Gracias a Dios to Porto Bello—of which the greatest was but seventy ton.

It was in the *Unity*, of only three hundred and sixty ton, and the *Hurn*, of one hundred and ten ton, that Le Maire and Schouten started on their search for the Southern Seas, and in as small a vessel that Abel Tasman discovered Van Dieman's Land and the Western Coast of New Zealand, where most of his men were killed by savages, in the fatal spot which he named Murderers' Bay, but

which has since been re-christened "Queen Charlotte's Sound."

In the *Desire*, of one hundred and twenty ton, the *Content*, of but sixty, and the *Hugh Gallant*, of but forty ton, the most "Worshipful Master Thomas Cavendish" harried the seas in the sixteenth century.

He seems to have been little better than a pirate, but such a fascinating pirate, to judge from a portrait showing him with a globe and compasses before him; so debonair—the dear old word suits but few men now—with such a laughing mouth and merry bold eye, with such thick brown hair waving carelessly back from a high forehead, it was little wonder if all the ladies of the Queen's gay Court lost their hearts to him, and did not scruple to show it.

Leaving Plymouth in 1586 with his adventurous little fleet, Cavendish made for the Straits of Magellan, and sailed along the West Coast of America, openly in search of plunder. There was nothing underhand about these handsome, courtly buccaneers; they robbed and loved and fought all with equal openness; always, as I can imagine, prefacing "Your money or your life" with "By your leave, good sir," while it was a jest and a blow all through; with white ruffles turned daintily

back from possible bloodstains; and a pounce-box lest some foul corpse comes "betwixt the wind and his nobility." Before Master Cavendish left the Californian coast we hear that he had sunk a "pretty number of merchantmen and collected a fair cargo of silver": but his greed, or more likely his love of adventure, was insatiable, and he lingered on, awaiting the arrival of an expected galleon from the Philippines, the Santa Anna, having on board a hundred and twenty thousand pieces of gold, and many bales of rich carpets, satins and damasks. The moment the ill-fated ship hove in sight Cavendish made for her with such decision and dash that she was speedily captured, emptied of all her rich treasure and burnt at the water's edge, the crew having been mercifully put on shore first. It was shocking, awful of course, but it seems to me, though this is doubtless only part of my mad sea strain, that it was all more exciting than golf -hitting a small white ball with a frantic effort as far as possible, then with an equal self-control guiding it gently into a small hole. Somehow the Santa Anna, the gold and the damasks, the rich carpets, loom larger on my horizon, but then the game was certainly not so safe.

Again Cavendish sailed off—distance seeming to hold no terrors for him—due west over the Pacific

to the Philippines, doubtless possessed by a laudable curiosity to see the country from which all these fine treasures came. Thence, after a run of nine weeks across the Indian Ocean, he touched at the Cape of Good Hope, then at St. Helena, of which he writes enthusiastically as being an earthly Paradise, and in another two months arrived at Plymouth, heavy with riches and honours, gayer, handsomer, and more self-confident than ever. However, his fame was at its highest tide, and there are few more hopelessly tragic histories to be met with than the story of the ill-fortune which attended his second venture, ere he met his death at sea, dying in all truth of a broken heart—interpreted by Maunder in his "Treasury" as "chagrin," while no less terrible were the adventures of the crew of the one surviving ship of the little fleet, the Desire, ere she ran on shore at Belhaven, in Ireland, the whole history, indeed, reading more like a parallel tale to "The Ancient Mariner" than actual history.

"At Cape Frio," writes Mr. John Lane, who was one of the very few survivors, "the winds were contrary; so that three weeks we were grievously vexed with cross winds, and our water consumed, our hope of life being very small. Some desired to go to Bahia, and submit themselves to the Portugals, rather than die of thirst; but the

Captain with fair persuasion altered their purpose of yielding to the Portugals. In this distress it pleased God to send us rain in such plenty as that we were well watered and in good comfort to return. But after we came near unto the sun, our dried penguins began to corrupt, and there bred in them a most loathsome and ugly worm of an inch long. This worm did so mightily increase and devour our victuals, that there was in reason no hope how we should avoid famine. There was nothing they did not devour—only iron excepted -our clothes, boots, shoes, hats, shirts, and stockings; and as for the ship, they did so eat the timber as that we greatly feared they would undo us by gnawing through the ship's side. Great was the care and diligence of our Captain, master and company to consume these vermin, but the more we laboured to kill them the more they increased, so that at last we could not sleep for them, but they would eat our flesh and bite like mosquitoes. In this woeful case after we had passed the equinox towards the north, our men began to fall sick of such a monstrous disease, as I think the like was never heard of; in their ankles it began to swell, from thence in two days it would be in their hearts so that they could not draw their breath, whereby our men grew mad with grief. Our Captain John

Davis, with the extreme anguish of his soul, was in such a woeful case that he only desired a speedy end, and though he were scarce able to speak for sorrow, yet he persuaded them to patience, and to give God thanks like dutiful children to accept of His chastisement. For all this divers grew raging mad, and some died in most loathsome and furious It was incredible to write our misery as it was, there was no man in perfect health but the Captain and one boy. The master being a man of good spirit, with extreme labour bore out his grief so that it bore not upon him. To be short, all our men died except sixteen, of which there were but five able to move, and upon us five only the labour of the ship did stand. The Captain and master, as occasion served, would take in and heave out the top-sails, the master only attending on the sprit-sail, and all of us at the capstan without sheets or tacks. In time our misery and weakness was so great that we could not take in or heave out a sail, so our top-sail and sprit-sails were all torn in pieces by the weather. The master and Captain taking their turns at the helm were mighty distressed and monstrously grieved with the most woeful lamentations of our sick men. lost wanderers upon the sea, it pleased God that we arrived at Belhaven in Ireland, and there ran the

ship on shore, where the Irishmen helped us to take in our sails, and to moor our ship for floating, which slender pains of theirs cost our Captain some ten pounds before he could have the ship in safety. Thus without victuals, sails, men, or any furniture, God only guided us to Ireland, where the Captain left the master and three or four of the company to keep the ship, and within five days after he, and certain other, had passage in an English fisher-boat to Padstow in Cornwall. In this manner our small remnant by God's only mercy were preserved and restored to our country, to Whom be all honour and glory, world without end."

CHAPTER VII

"They call me the little one, and say I cannot go straight and fearless on a prosperous voyage like ships that sail out to sea; and I deny it not; I am a little boat, but to the sea all is equal; fortune, not size, makes the difference. Let another have the advantage in rudders; for some put their confidence in this and some in that, but may my salvation be of God."—LEONIDAS OF TARENTUM.

Or all titles in the world that of "Prince" always seems to me the most romantic. The moment the Prince becomes King, he becomes also mundane and domestic; but what woman is there whose early imagination has not been fired by a Prince, fairy or mortal? Our every girlish dream was full of him; he was to come to one and all, rich and poor, pretty and plain, for he was no true Prince that could not both beautify and enrich. Once we were married all would be at an end, though as the Prince's consort we would without doubt live happily ever afterwards. But it was indeed the coming of the Prince that was the thing. That wonderful moment when, down between the grey beech trunks with their faint veil of spring

greenery, he would come riding on his white horse, all caparisoned with scarlet and shod with silver. Yes, of course it was that coming that really counted. For with him it would be love at first sight—love of a little maiden in a white frock among the bluebells, while how could anyone with a heart in her breast say "No" to such a lover, even for the sake of prolonging that magic time? So it would be a light foot on his, and a light leap to the saddle-bow, and over the hills and away. Then the wings of the imagination would falter, and one would be back again to debate whether one's hair should be loosely flowing or bound, one's girdle blue or pink or palest green like the beech leaves, as if it mattered; nothing matters if it is the "really truly" Prince, not even a mackintosh and a sailor hat.

But no "really truly" Prince, save one, ever came to transmute my plainness to beauty, and in place of riding a white steed he arrived by the slow and difficult stages of crabbed black letters and long s's. But he came to stay—the shape, the mien, the expression, the high brow, the ardent eye and straight black hair, being all made visible out of that dust-bound old tome, which I hauled down from the topmost library shelf one wild wet winter's day, years, and years, and

years ago. Thus my romance came to me in the winter and not in the spring, and my hero lived for me only in a book; and so lives still, which is more than most heroes do. Charlotte, on the contrary—ah, well, I declared I would think no more about it, but it is most manifestly absurd to imagine a person is a hero because he has a Roman nose and an overbearing manner.

Now, my hero is a real Prince, and has been and always will be, though he died to this world many years ago, having achieved in life his own immortality. His name was Henry, Henry of Portugal, and he was the son of John I., who took him at an early age—but little older indeed than I was at the time when he first captured my heart, to wit fifteen years - with him on an expedition against the most romantic of all foes, the Moors. At the head of a large and brilliant army King John and his son took Ceuta, established a camp there, and lingered on for several months, sending forth sallies to subdue the still unconquered Moors in the surrounding country. Through the long, clear moonlit African evenings young Prince Henry made it his custom to sit among the captive chiefs, listening to their stories of adventure, well worth the hearing, for they were the most brilliant and dashing people,

the most ardent explorers of the then known world, and one may picture how the youth, half man, half boy, drank in, like new wine, all the intoxicating tales he heard, of lands as yet but half guessed at by European peoples, of wonders and treasures, of beauties and mysteries, of which they had never even dreamt.

Back in his own country, his brain still afire with all he had heard, Prince Henry established himself in the old Castle of Sagres, near Cape St. Vincent, and bent all his splendid intellect to the study of mathematics and navigation, gathering round him, from all parts of the world, the bravest seamen and most famous navigators; while he matured the great idea which the Moors had kindled in his mind, that of reaching India by the West Coast of Africa. How well I can picture him, the ardent student, with the fragile body and the great soul shining through his dark eyes, among all those learned men, and roughhanded, rough-voiced, bearded sons of the sea; the eager poring over books and charts, the measuring, the calculating, and the hungry ear lent to the tale of this voyage or that, of such and such a ship, of such rocks and currents.

At last, after years of thought and study, two ships were fitted up, and started off in the year

1412 on a voyage of discovery along the African Coast, not, however, reaching farther than Cape Bojador, whose menacing cliffs, stretching far out into the Atlantic, so terrified their commanders—being rendered truly awful by the fatal Syrens and Titans, who were well known to lie agape for human lives in such places—that the ships were quickly put about, neither captain nor men daring to venture farther.

For six more years Prince Henry waited and matured his plans; then sent forth his two most trusty commanders, Jaun Gonsalez Garco and Tristan Vaz Tajeira, to double the ill-famed promontory. There is little wonder that they, too, thought the place infested with supernatural powers, for a terrific storm caught them and drove them out to sea, with straining sails and snapping masts, till by good-fortune they found sanctuary in a then unknown island, which they thankfully christened Porto Santo, lingering there to somewhat repair damages before they haltingly returned to Portugal. Still Prince Henry was not discouraged, but waited and worked, and in a few years more sent out yet another fleet, which took formal possession of Porto Santo and discovered Madeira.

On the return of the voyager's, filled with glow-

ing accounts of the lovely Isle, the Prince equipped yet another fleet, and sent it forth to the new land of promise, with colonists to settle there, and with vines from Cyprus and sugar-canes from Sicily to stock it with, naming the capital Funchal, that being the Portuguese name for the fennel which grew thickly all over the island.

This discovery seemed to bring good-fortune in its train, spurring on the Prince's men to launch farther out to sea instead of creeping slavishly along the coasts; thus, by escaping the shore currents, the gallant Don Gilianez passed the dreaded Cape (Bojador) and, seven years after this, Nunno Tristan doubled Cape Verd, while but a little later Gonzalo Vallo discovered three of those islands now named the Azores.

Sad it is to think that Prince Henry passed away to a still more distant land before he could see the full fruits of his life's endeavour, for but seven years after his death the Line was crossed for the first time, while thirteen years later a fleet sent out by John II. discovered the lands of Benin and Congo, and thus revealed a new hemisphere to Europe.

Now the memory of ancient Phœnician legends, telling of the circumnavigation of Africa, began to revive afresh in men's minds with vague tales or

the way round by that coast to the Indian Ocean. Fired by this thought, Bartholomew Diaz boldly set sail from Lisbon, intent on pushing onwards till he solved the question one way or another. Absolutely undaunted by the adverse winds of a strange ocean, by semi-starvation from the loss of his store ship, and the mutiny of his crews, he pushed on till he reached the very southernmost point of Africa. But his already battered ships could not contend against the high seas surging round the Cape Tormentias, as he called it, and finally both he and his ships were lost there in 1500, leaving the accomplishment of his great task to Vasco de Gama, who rounded the Cape at nearly the same time that the glorious news of the discovery of a new world in the Far West flashed through Europe—that wonderful world which some declared was no new discovery, but only the re-discovery of a country which had first been lighted on by Leif, the son of Eric the Red. Leif, it is said, followed on Bjorne Herjulfson, the discoverer of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, himself the successor to Gunnbjorn, the discoverer of Greenland, and that mighty Norwegian Viking Nadad, the founder of the kingdom of Iceland.

Here, in this sailing-ship, these brave men, who have—with my beloved Prince Henry—always

actually lived for me, have become even more fully vitalized. The life I see around me, save that this ship is far larger than any of theirs, seems so much the same, the circumstances almost identical, and our means of grappling with them but little improved; the minds of the sailors, their superstitions, their fears, their pleasures, all the The Captain and officers are alone modernized by education; but the man standing at this moment at the wheel, who is an old whaler, a Norwegian or Swede—all the Northern nations, Norwegians, Swedes, Danes, Germans and Dutch, are alike known as Square Heads, and all the Latins as Dagos—is absolutely primitive, both in mind and speech, and might well have sailed with Nadad, the soul of the old salt coming down to us now, untouched by the centuries which have passed. Ships carry more sail, the lines they are built on have altered, the magnet and other unholy instruments have been discovered; but that is all, and it really affects the waves, the tides, and men like these not one wit. Indeed, among these old-world and primitive people there is still to be found a deep distrust of anything which they are unable to explain, a distrust as profound, though perhaps not so freely expressed, as it was in the days of Dante, when Roger Bacon, showing a magnetized needle

81

floating in a straw on a basin of water to Brunetto Latini, Dante's old tutor, declared that no master-mariner would ever use it for fear of being accused of witchcraft; while many years later, in the seven-teenth century indeed, a famous and successful mariner, one Luke Fox, writes that he will not set his sight towards the sky but when "I either call to God or make celestial observations," going on to explain that though it was necessary to observe the signs of the heavens, yet it was little less than sacrilege to deliberately work out observations by them.

CHAPTER VIII

- "Ships are but boards, sailors but men; there be land rats and water rats, land thieves and water thieves."—The Merchant of Venice.
- "You are always telling me to live in the present, and you yourself really exist only in the past," said Charlotte rather pettishly. She is getting better, there is no doubt of it.
- "But my past is so far away—centuries back—that it is quite safe; and besides, it is not really my past, which makes all the difference."
- "How did you know that the men's hands would get all torn and bleeding the other day when they were taking in the sails in that furious squall?" retorted my friend, with apparent irrelevance. "And how did you know that the sails felt like iron, all bellied out as they were by the wind?"
 - "I could see."
- "Oh no, you couldn't; it looked quite soft to me. But that's not all. How did you know what the mate meant when he sent Ingorson up to clinch the what's-its-name?"

- "The cross-jack leech-line?"
- "Yes; you said that the man would have to get out on the yard and come down the edge of the sail and——"
 - "Not the edge, child—the leech—"
- "Easy enough, I should think," commented Charlotte, surveying her embroidery with the greatest interest.
- "Easy enough!" I snorted indignantly, tumbling straight into the trap she had set for me. "Look! if you had to slip off the yard-arm up there and slide down the leech of the sail, wouldn't your nails get torn from your fingers with hanging on, and all the skin get rubbed off from between your knees? And then to hang with the sail flapping like a wild thing, and nothing but the clew-garnet at your back to catch at if it shakes you off, and the sweat running down into your eyes and blinding you, and all the bones in your body cutting through your flesh, and every muscle a-strain to hold on to the sail with your knees and one hand, and clinch the leech-line with your teeth and the other hand! Easy, eh! and all your fingers bleeding, and the whole yard a-swing, so that you are sometimes out far over the sea and sometimes over the deck, feet below."

"But what—why, what are the leech-lines for?"

"To clew the sail, of course—running from the middle of the top of the sail to the middle of the side—in the same way as the bunt-lines clew up the sail from the back. Men sometimes come down all the sails, from the royal arm, by the leeches, but then they have both hands and knees."

"Is it easy?"

"How should I know?" I retorted, suddenly put on my guard by the twinkle in Charlotte's eye.

"Because you've been there before, my dear. Not your past, indeed! Do you know, Crabsticks, when you slipped out of your bunk this morning to get your coffee, your hair was all sticking out quite straight in a little tight pigtail, and you balanced yourself like an old salt, and when the curtain swung against the cup and slopped coffee into the saucer you said 'Damn!' in a thirty-fathom voice? And I saw you—oh, quite plainly. Not as you were at the time of the Argonauts, but as you were when you sailed with Every the pirate, or some such worthy: little short blue jacket with brass buttons, and white bell-bottomed trousers, and striped guernsey, and just that little pigtail. I am really not quite sure that you are not the incarnation of Every himself, and it was you who once captured the Princess Arungzeeb and her hundred Mahomedan ladies, and the ship that

carried them and the fifty-two lakhs of rupees, and the guns and the matchlocks. Do you remember by any chance those gay days, my dear, when you tied up your black beard with red ribbons, and shot a man a week, just to show you were master?"

"I remember that Dr. Dare said you were to go to bed at nine o'clock, and now it is ten and getting chilly, so down you come, my lady," I answered in my most matter-of-fact voice. Charlotte is dreamy enough as it is without any encouraging; I know the danger myself only too well. Besides, she has a way at times of enfolding some individual in her tissue of dreams like a cocoon. The young Scotchman is proving rather an attractive person, with a certain dry wit of his own, while the Captain is a distinctly romantic figure—on his ship; when people are so completely right in their own environment, it is ten to one they will not appear to advantage out of it. Anyhow, I feel that it is well to keep her as close as possible to the realities of life. One would not think this difficult on a diet of dry hash, but in spite of all that food faddists declare, I am sure that it has "nothing to do with the case."

Another morning, and we are in latitude 32° 50 north and longitude 20° 27' west, while a light

easterly wind has carried us a hundred and thirty miles since yesterday. It is the most blue-and-white and eminently fresh day I have ever seen. can't beat an east wind on a Western sea," says the Captain, and if it is always like this I very decidedly agree with him. The blueness of the sea is trimmed with white wavelets like the crisp goffered frills on a girl's dress, while the sky is flecked with white clouds to match. Even the very sound of the waves is like the swish of starched muslin round the feet of some restless coquette. But still I fancy there is something rather ominous in all the beauty and gaiety, judging by the way the Captain keeps coming out of his cabin, hanging over the taffrail either side of the main-deck, and scanning the horizon; always finishing with a nod and smile at us on the poop. We are close friends with the "Old Man" by now, as we are with the whole ship's crew-not excepting the one-legged Irish cook, ith whom we have many a long and serious confab, usually at about eleven o'clock, when we have found that the potatoes, boiled in their jackets for the men's dinner, are at their most perfect stage. The "Doctor" gives us one each, halved, and with a liberal dab of salt butter "in its innards," and we sit on the step of the galley to eat them, while he is busy inside among his pots and pans,

generally in a haze of smoke, and converse most affably. The "boy" is a "limb," we hear. As for the galley chimney, "Marm, I declare the soot that there funnel do send down do be enough to pave hell a mile wid, and it's after makin' the whole place as black as the Earl of Hell's workin' waistcoat—it is for sure."

We talk to "Chips" and "Sails" in their workshops, and the apprentice boys in their room, being shown the photographs of their "young ladies" boldly and with much tittering, and those of their mothers with shyness, and all the other wonders and treasures of their sea-chests. And yet we have never heard any of the men speak of their people, excepting for the boys, and the mate, who tells us of his grandmother, who he most evidently adores, and Denis, who will at times mention, rather disparagingly, I must own, his "old white stocking"—all wives are called "white stockings" by the men on a sailing-ship, as they fondly believe them—the white stockings, not the wives —to be still the height of fashion, and always donned by their women-folk when they go to draw their husbands' pay; I believe, indeed, that most of the seamen forget that they were ever born of women, so detached has their roving life made them. Most of them seemed to have shipped to

almost every port in the world, and on every sort of ship—excepting a steamer: on Yankee downeasters, and whaling-boats or sealers, clippers and full-rigged ships. They tell me that they will often sign on for a ship without knowing where she is going or what she is, or how long she will be out; that often, indeed, they don't know that they are going at all, till they awake one fine morning and find themselves on some strange boat, perhaps already far out at sea, with nothing but the clothes they stand up in, in which to face alike the freezing cold of the Roaring Forties or the blazing tropics—and badly enough they fare too, unless there is a sloop-chest on board, as there is here, from which men may buy clothes, the amount being docked out of their wages. "Shanghaing" they call this shipping off of insensible men, either drunk or drugged on board of ships—which are all ready to start save for a shortage of crew—by the runners. of shipping agents, or boarding-house keepers. In one ship where he was mate, the Captain tells me, a dead man was shipped on board as a drunk, the runner getting his bonus and being safe on shore, while the ship was well out to sea, before the trick was discovered.

In Jamaica one young fellow, whose parents owned a large estate, took a fancy for going to

sea, and, running away from home with a little money in his pockets, shipped as an apprentice. But by the time the boy reached New York he was already tired of the life and deserted his ship, only to fall into the hands of a boarding-house keeper, who made him drunk one night and put him on board a vessel which he declared was going to Jamaica, but which he found, on awaking next morning, was bound for Canton. Two years later, and the Captain ran against him in San Francisco, finding that he had been pretty well all over the world during the interval, and had signed on to his last ship under the belief that she was bound for that home from which he was farther away than he had been two long years before.

It is an odd experience, this living so closely among people of whose personal life one realizes so little. One grows curiously intimate, and yet detached from them, and from all the world—from the friends, the relations, the daily round of duties, the letters written and received, the news in the daily papers. It all seems, indeed, to have already dropped away from us, even as the very memory of any home life seems to have dropped away from these men, and we live in and for the present to such a marked degree that I foresee it will be far from easy to take up the old tracks of

life again, the worst of it being that I feel as if I shall never want to. Here, in this miniature world, this ark of refuge, one is so secure from all the worries and littlenesses with which people make life a burden one to another, I feel I have not the courage to face even the thought of returning to it.

The mate is the oddest character, interesting Charlotte and me most immensely. Really the amount of thought and speculation which we have expended over that great little man is comic, but he is as difficult to read as a sundial on a March day—so full of moods and of alternate bursts of geniality and gloom. He is a short man and very square, chiefly distinguishable from the common herd by a pair of intensely blue eyes with black rims to the pupils, and by a quaint similarity, both in his make and his attitudes, to the first Napoleon. In windy weather he turns the flapping sides of his soft felt hat into the crown, so that it may fit more tightly on his head, the angle of the back and front thus faithfully repeating the lines of a cocked hat, while he stands with his legs far apart and his hands clasped behind him, the aggressive thumb well up. When in repose he sits with his hands folded, the extreme restfulness of his attitude intensifying the

dramatic force with which he can spin a yarn, or a "cuffer," as they call it here. This evening at tea there was some spirit of emulation abroad, and one story after another was told, each being more wonderful and more difficult to believe than the last; till at length the Captain topped a far from mean record by the account of a shark caught on the last voyage, which had evidently, at some stage of its career, swallowed up an old salt, "skin and bones" and rig-out too, for when it was cut open the remains of a pair of sea-boots, and the leather-bound buttonholes and horn buttons of an oilskin coat, which even its digestive organs could not tackle, were found inside it.

"And that's a fact!" asserted the narrator at the end, as I have noticed that people who have recounted a most palpable fabrication always do. "Ask the mate if it's not, for it happened last voyage when he was here."

But for once Mr. Macgregor did not support his superior officer as he should have done. "I've told three lees this mornin'," he asserted, lifting his blue eyes deprecatingly from his plate, "an' I dare na' tell anither."

He sings too, as well as "spins cuffers," up on the deck on calm, still evenings—that is, if he is in the mood, for at times dense fits of sulkiness

encompass him, when one can imagine him growling over to himself, like the Miller of Dee, "I care for nobody, no not I, and nobody cares for me." But then again, like the little girl in the song, "When he is good he is very, very good," full of the pleasantest talent for building castles in the air and the quaintest sea-songs. The following is one of his favourites, though, alas! without its melodious sing-song air it seems nothing:

"'Twas on the first of Jan-u-ary,
Way down in the Southern Seas,
Our ship lay on a coral reef,
At anchor, awaiting for a breeze.
Her Captain he was down below,
And her crew were knocking about,
When all of a sudden there came a sudden splash,
And then an awful shout.

Chorus.

"Blow, ye winds—high—low, Blow, ye winds—high—low; Clear away with the morning dew, And blow, ye winds—high—low.

"'A man overboard!' we all did shout,
And all ran for'ard for to see,
When there, on our best bower, sat a merman,
With his tail a-dippin' down in the sea.
His eyes they were red, and his nose it was blue,
And his mouth was the size of three,
While his long, long tail, like a bloomin' whale,
He kept a waggin' down in the sea.

Chorus.

"Blow, ye winds—high—low, etc.

"Then up came our mate as bold as brass—
'What ho, merman!' says he;
'If the truth should be told, it's to see your Captain bold,
I've a favour for to ask of he.'
The Captain came to the good ship's side,
And he looked away down in the sea;
Says he, 'My little man, just tell me if you can,
What's the favour that you want of me!'

Chorus.

"Blow, ye winds-high-low, etc.

"'Oh, you've dropped your anchor in front of my house,
And in front of my only door;
And my wife can't get out for to walk about,
Nor my children—two, three, four.
'Twould break your heart for to hear them shout;
What a row they've had with me!
For I've been out all night, at a big sea-fight,
In the bottom of the deep blue sea.'

Chorus.

"Blow, ye winds-high-low, etc.

"'The anchor shall be hove up at once,
And your chicks and your wife set free;
But I never saw a winkle, from a sprat to a whale,
That could talk like that to me.
Your figure-head is a seaman bold,
And your voice is an Englishman's,
So come, my little man, just tell me if you can,
Where did you get that tail?'

Chorus.

"Blow, ye winds-high-low, etc.

"'Some years ago, in a ship here about,
I was washed overboard in a gale;
And away down below, where the seaweeds grow,
I spied a maid with a tail.
She saved my life, I made her my wife,
And my feet changed in-stant-ly;
So I mar-ie-er-aid this mer-ee-maid
At the bottom of the deep blue sea.'

Chorus.

"Blow, ye winds—high—low, Blow, ye winds—high—low; Clear away with the morning dawn, And blow, ye winds—high—low."

CHAPTER IX

"I will example you with thievery:
The sun's a thief, and with his great attraction
Robs the vast sea: the moon's an arrant thief,
And her pale fire she snatches from the sun:
The sea's a thief whose liquid surge resolves
The moon into salt tears."

Timon of Athens.

THE Captain was right in distrusting that blueand-white day, for it was followed by a spell of unsettled, squally weather. But now it is absolutely halcyon again—the blue of the sky unbroken by a cloud, the sea by the faintest fleck of white. We are just moving, perhaps a couple of knots an hour, and the sails are flapping idly, with a truly patrician air of doing nothing with grace—though, in fact, like most idlers, they are wearing themselves to shreds.

We are getting near the tropics, and some of the good new sails, which are kept for the rougher latitudes, are being taken down, and old, patched sails bent in their place. Mercifully it is smooth and still, for bending a big square sail in the teeth

of a wind—as has to be done sometimes when a sail splits—must be a terrific task. As it is, it is delightful to lie back and watch the men's figures against the blue sky and the spread of the great creamy sail. In bending a new sail it is first run up by means of block and gaunt-line till the bunt is well above the yard, and then spread along the jackstay, the ear-rings being then passed by the men at the yard-arms. Bunt-lines and leech-lines are clinched, and the head of the sail fastened to the jackstay with rovings—short lengths of rope yarn—and the sheet and clew-line shackled on to the clew—the extreme corner of the sail—the sheet running free on a block. When the sail is to be furled it is run up by the leech and bunt lines and made fast to the jackstay—an iron bar running along the top of the yard—by the gaskets, little short ropes which are tied round the furled sail. This is only a tiny bit of the work of the day, which, like all other days, is full to overflowing; there seems to be always something happening on board a "wind-jammer," always something waiting to be done, and that quickly. Before you can say " Jack Robinson" one piece of work is finished and the whole watch seem to be suddenly at something else, painting, or setting sail, or shifting yards—which reminds me that I

have for the first time come across that classical personage the original Jack Robinson in a song that the mate entertained us with the other day. I have tried to make him sing it slowly, so that I may take the words down. But if he sings it slowly he seems to lose the thread of the song, and it is only the two last verses, which tell of the jilting of this historical personage, and are sung with a funereal drawl, that I have been able to catch precisely.

"Says the lady, says she, 'I've changed my state.'
'Why, you don't mean,' says Jack, 'that you've got a mate?
You know you promised me.' Says she, 'I couldn't wait,
For no tidings could I gain of you, Jack Robinson.'

"'But to fret and to stew about it's all in vain:

I'll get a ship and go to Holland, France, or Spain;

No matter where—to Portsmouth I'll ne'er come again.'

And he was off afore you could say 'Jack Robinson.'"

"I never saw a more unmistakable sailor than the mate is," I said to the Captain the other evening as we sat on the skylight of the saloon; "he must have been just born to it, as I believe you were."

"Ay, there's something in that, and the old salts have a saying for it," answered the Captain. "'Tell my mother I'm a hard case,' they say; born in the maintops, brought up in the fore t'gallant cross-trees, every hair in my head is a

rope yarn, every finger in my hand a marlingspike, every bone in my body a capstan-bar, and every drop of blood in my veins Stockholm tar. Tell my mother I'm a hard case, and sleep in the upper bunk.'"

- "That's you," whispered Charlotte maliciously from the far side of me, "even to the upper bunk, and—well, as for the material of that pigtail——"But I kicked her violently, and she was silent. The Captain thinks us quite mad enough as it is.
- "You can't give me notice to quit here on the high seas," I told her later; "so I can do what I like."
- "I'll dock your pay for insubordination," asserted Charlotte grandly.
- "Yes, my child, you could; and the worst of it is that I shouldn't care a tinker's dam."
- "My dear Crabsticks, your language is getting almost beyond words."
- "Well, perhaps the sooner it does get beyond words the better; but that isn't language—that's merely a technical expression: a tinker's dam is only——"
- "The same as any other man's damn, I expect," responded my liege lady; "but joking apart, dear, you really must be careful. The mate says that when the Captain heard there were ladies

coming on board for this voyage, he gathered them all together and declared that there must simply be no swearing aft of the deck-house."

"Oh, I must tell you: they say confession is good for the soul. The other day up here, the men were muddling something awfully, and the Captain was tramping up and down shouting at them, and in between snapping his teeth, as though to mince up his language small before it came out. Then suddenly it became too much for him; the men were trying to get the sheets in without the capstan, the second mate among them, and the man at the pin didn't turn it quickly enough -I thought the first man was through the port-'Turn it-turn it!' yelled the Captain. But there was Johnson at the pin—that big Norwegian with the scar on his head—and he seemed somehow to get muddled, for he missed it at the slack, and the "Old Man" snapped his teeth —then he let it run. The Captain said, 'Go to hell!' in Hindustani, and like a flash it came back to me—fancy, after all these years! So I capped it with 'and stay there,' in the same lingo. You should have seen his face! He grew quite crimson, and then he said, half laughing, 'You had me there, Miss Adair.'

"And I said: 'That's a rhyme, and it's lucky.

But really I wouldn't trouble so much if I were you: we are quite used to it. I often do it myself, and it really is such a relief.'

- "And he said: 'What, rhyming?'
- "And I said: 'No.'"
- "And then?"
- "Oh, that ended it for the time—the sail was flapping, you know, like fury—but I think he's felt more at his ease with us since."
- "I don't know if it's right," sighed Charlotte, who is afflicted with a tender conscience, which is as much a matter of a skin or two as a tendency to blush. "We might influence them for good, you know."
- "You influence everybody for good, my darling, but it is your eyes and not your morals that do it." And she did not contradict, for being another woman it was no good her telling me that she'd rather have a beautiful character than beautiful eyes.

To-day the awning is up on the poop-deck, and Charlotte is swinging lazily in a hammock beneath its shade; while I wander restlessly from port to starboard, watching the little flotillas of nautilus, or Portuguese men-of-war as the sailors call them, which dot the placid sea, each with its tiny sail making the very best of the air, which is

more like the peaceful breath of a child than an ocean breeze. They are such lovely wee things, these "men-of-war," in curve and shade like the petals of some fragile, violet-tinted orchid. They might, indeed, with their delicate silken sails, be the state barges of Titania herself—those silken sails which are furled so tightly when the wind rises to anything more robust than this gentle sighing, that is half a caress. Purple and fine linen, indeed, is this tiny creature clothed in, and fashioned by the master carver with as much thought as would serve for the making of a world. What a life! To sail and sail and sail in these wonderful tropical seas, with a beauty that fits its sunniest mood like a smile, and a strength that can yet hold its own against the wildest fury of wind and wave.

In strange contrast to this blossom of the sea is a great shark, which is hanging about our bows, the only one that we have seen as yet this voyage. He was first caught sight of by a man up in the rigging, who called out to tell us the news, on which we all rushed to the taffrail and leant over it to gaze at this Nero of the deep, who was sulking about at a little distance from the ship, having sent on ahead his intrepid little pilot to spy out the land.

What a strange thing the law of attraction is! It seems almost incredible that a little inoffensive fish, such as this pilot is, should be chosen out by this fierce gluttonous shark for his lifelong companion, and treated, too, far better than many an East-Ender treats his wife. Is he a true comrade. or is he a serf who wins protection by his unswerving devotion? Or is the solution of the bond to be found in that inexplicable fascination that the guilty holds for the innocent, the unquestioning devotion to an idol who may be a very Moloch for all that the worshipper cares? The very young sharks do not seem to possess these pages in waiting; perhaps they are only won, as a knight wins his spurs, by deeds of prowess, or perhaps they do not attract them till they attain their full growth and ferocity. If so, how does the aspirant for the post of pilot make known his wishes before he is gobbled up by his intended patron, is a question to which I can find no answer.

Once established, though, the little pilot seems safe enough, and in return for his services, without which his purblind master would be helpless indeed, he is allowed to creep in under him for safety, and even, as some say, to take refuge between his great jaws, which is, for the most

part, a bourne from which no traveller returns, though some of the African tribes do look on a shark's gullet as the direct road to heaven.

We threw a lump of pork overboard this morning, and the gallant pilot swam up to it, sniffed round it several times, then returned to report "all's well," I suppose, for his master swam up and snapped it down greedily, though when another and yet larger piece was thrown over, this time garnished with hooks, he was warned off and dropped sulkily astern. The Captain says he has known a poor little pilot, whose patron has been shot or caught, follow in the wake of the ship for days and days, a humble enough mourner, yet perhaps a more sincere one than many of us are likely to have.

The sea is so smiling to-day, it is difficult to realize what a terrible record of carnage it bears locked away for ever in its bosom. How many men, who "have suffered a sea change into something rare and strange," lie beneath its surface, and gallant ships, too, in and out of whose bare ribs dart the weird deep-sea fish, living always in an unutterable calm, an unchangeable temperature.

"Methought I saw a thousand fearful wrecks; A thousand men that fishes gnawed upon; Wedges of gold, great anchors, heaps of pearl, Inestimable stones, unvalued jewels—

All scattered in the bottom of the sea. Some lay in dead men's skulls; and in those holes Where eyes did once inhabit, these were crept, As 'twere in scorn of eyes reflecting gems."

Shakespeare, for all he lived so far from it, knew the temper of the sea well—as he did, oddly enough, the phraseology of sailing-ships. "The sea's a thief," he says; and rightly enough too, for not only men and ships fall victims to its maw, but the so-called solid earth itself.

There is a tiny place on the Suffolk coast, whose name I cannot remember, now the merest hamlet, which was yet in the time of Edward the Confessor an exceedingly flourishing port, and might be so still, had not the greedy sea devoured at one gulp seven churches and a monastery, a great highway, two gaols, and many other buildings like the "bigbellied Ben" of the old jingle who "eat the church, and eat the steeple, eat the priest and all the people."

The island of Stepney, too, it has eaten away; nibbling insidiously around it, as a mouse nibbles at some tasty morsel of cheese, so that the church at Minster, which used to be nearly in the middle of the island, is now on the very shore; while in other places on the English shores, particularly on the East Coast, the old church bells ring deep beneath the waves, far out to sea.

Many ancient writers tell a strange story of an

island, that Plato spoke of by the name of Atlantus, and which, they declared, lay opposite to the Straits of Gibraltar, reporting it as fruitful and populous, a place from which many warlike chiefs made frequent raids upon Europe and Northern Africa. But at length the hungry sea devoured it, helped by a marine earthquake, and its place was known no more, a fate which I have often heard prophesied for the little island of Mauritius, which was shot out of the sea—quite lately as geologists count time—a mere seething mass of rock, and lava and smoke.

To-day in latitude 22° 6' north and longitude 24°7' west, we have caught the North-East Trades, just below the Calm Belt of Cancer, known even now as the Horse Latitude, from the fact of the ships carrying horses to the West Indies having so often to throw them overboard in this belt of wearying, windless calms.

The Trades here do not appear to be governed by any such laws of the Medes and Persians as people seem to imagine, and the Captain tells me that, oddly enough, in common with the weather over all the rest of the globe, they seem to be getting more and more uncertain; but in any case in March they are very variable between latitudes 20° and 30° north, blowing most steadily during

the months of May, June, August, and September; though in longitude 35° west, and between the parallels 10° and 15° north, they blow consistently enough, excepting in July, August, September, and October, when they are apt to vary a little to the east of the same latitude.

From the Line to 12° north of it, according to the time of year, lies a region torn by the meeting of the South-West Monsoons and North-Easterly Trades, a region of uncertain winds, of ever restless seas, of thunder, lightning, rain and general misery; a region where it seems as if Nature drew her breath in gasping horror at the conflict of her children—that conflict enblematic of the eternal struggle between the North and South; a region to which learned men have given the name of equatorial calms, but which sailors call by the far more expressive appellation of "the Doldrums." In a steamer one runs merrily through it, undisturbed by any of its whimsies; but it still remains for us to experience it in a sailing-ship, which by all accounts may swing there nearly stationary for weeks, while the oily water around grows thick with the ship's débris, and one whistles in vain for a wind, willing to welcome open-armed any witch, be she never so repulsive a hag, who would sell a fair breeze "in the corner of a napkin wrapped."

Our first month at sea is over, and the men's advance of pay has expired. It is a solemn occasion, and this evening has been marked by an equally solemn festivity, the "Dead Horse" being buried with all ceremony. Charlotte and I watched the proceeding entirely fascinated by it all; the round circle of the sea and the translucent sky, like a clear, concave globe above it, its beauty intensified by that strange hush of evening which is so intensely marked at sea, though why I scarcely know, for there are no birds to cease their songs as the sun sets. The sails grew dark against the clear sky, the golden haze gathered, and the silence gathered also, till one could almost hear one's own heart beat, then suddenly it was broken by the deep tones of men singing, and a procession of strangely attired figures swept round the deck from the fo'c'sle, headed by Jimmy Ducks, the cook's boy, astride on a wooden horse and drawn by four of the men, with beards of oakum reaching to It reminded me of a painting by their knees. Rembrandt in its tints, but it reminded me also of Homer, and the brave men he sang of; of Jason and the voyage of the Argo; and of the siege of Troy and the wooden horse; while the light was so elusive that the masts and rigging might well have been well overlaid with gold and the sails of purple silk.

We heard the voices before we saw the men, the swinging, haunting melody of the ridiculous old chanty, sung so truly and well in the men's deep full-chested sailor voices:

"For they say so, and they hope so, Oh-h-h-h, poor old man!"

Another moment or two and the dim line of men swept round by the galley; the wooden horse and its escort, at first no more than a blurred silhouette of browns, russets, blues, and greens, till gradually the mystic steed with its fancied halo of old romance revealed itself as a wooden barrel, with a grotesquely-carved wooden head attached, caparisoned in a gaudy striped rug; and its rider as Jimmy Ducks beaming with pride, with cocked hat, streaming plume, and crimson mantle.

Twice the procession swept round the maindeck, bringing disillusion with its near approach, and enfolding itself again in mystery and beauty as it neared the fo'c'sle. Then the men gathered to a group below the main-mast, up which one of the boys ran and fixed a running rope to the end of the main-yard, ready for the last act of the tragic drama.

Poor old horse! The solemnity of his obsequies was somewhat marred by the weakness of his neck, which gave way when the rope was fixed to it, so

that the head careered off aloft by itself; but finally it was secured firmly round the body and swung high to the yard-end, when the rope was loosed, and it was dropped deep, deep to its last resting-place, symbolical of that well or ill spent month's pay; its funeral ode being chanted in a great deep bass voice by the hangman, the entire crew joining in the refrain:

"They call me Hanging Johnny, Away-a-a-ay, away-a-a-ay; Because I've hanged so many; Oh, hang, boys, hang!

"Of late I married a wife,
Away-a-a-ay, away-a-a-ay;
But our life was one of strife,
Oh, hang, boys, hang!
But I soon grew tired of her song;
For they call me Hanging Johnny,
Because I've hanged so many.

"So I hung her high on my gallows-tree,
Away-a-a-ay, away-a-a-ay;
But I'll never hang my Nanny,
Though they call me Hanging Johnny,
Because I've hanged so many.
Away-a-a-ay, away-a-a-ay;
Oh, hang, boys, hang!"

CHAPTER X

"Men say they know many things; But lo! they have taken wings,— The arts and sciences. And a thousand appliances; The wind that blows Is all that anybody knows." H. D. THORRAU.

WE are only three degrees from the Line: so far the Fates, or rather the winds, have been moderately kind to us, but now they have fled away and left us to our fate, and there seems really no reason why we should not stay here for ever, rolling and wallowing in a sulky sea, which, unbroken by a single crest of foam, seems to come from every direction at once. It is hot, hotter than anything I have ever known before, and it is raining with a persistent drizzle, the whole affair reminding me of a Turkish bath in which the cold shower has gone wrong.

The men loll about in a costume consisting of shirt and trousers, while we too have doffed every

possible garment, finally discarding shoes and stockings, like the rest of them; indeed, at the moment of writing I have on a print blouse and skirt and one white petticoat with no vestige of starch left in it—to tell the truth, not much whiteness either—and nothing, literally nothing, else. At first, with very creditable modesty, we tucked our feet away under our skirts, but very soon, getting hardened by usage, stuck them out brazenly on the bars of our lounging chairs to get as much air as possible. We cannot even do our hair up; insufficient as mine is for the ordinary use of hair-dressing, it feels like a heavy mustard poultice if I attempt to pin it to my head, so I wear what Charlotte calls my "Georgian pigtail," and do not in the least envy her the two thick ropes of plaits that she swings impatiently over the back of her chair.

We have passed the second day of the Doldrums, and, finding it impossible even to sit still, wandered like lost spirits from bow to stern, panting for a breath of fresh air, and finally taking anchorage on the rail of the poop, where we perched with our feet in buckets of salt water, beside the three men passengers, looking, as the mate informs us, in our state of dank and bedraggled misery, like "a row o' drooked craws on a pailing."

It was too hot to-night for anyone to attempt to start a song, and we lingered till late up on the poop in dreamy silence, which was only broken now and then by a little crooning sound from the mate, who had draped himself over the taffrail by the rudder, on the lookout for sharks. The persistently recurring soft sound, that was not quite singing or quite speaking, went on for so long that at last my curiosity got the better of my indolence, and I dragged myself out of my chair to ask him what he was singing.

"I was nae singing," he answered placidly, but just saying a wee bit of a poem over to me'self."

In a moment I was all eagerness. I love poetry, perhaps because my life has so far been all prose, and I was hugely delighted to think that I had at last found a fellow-spirit.

- "Say it again—do say it again," I entreated, just as one used to in the old nursery days.
 - "I can no do that."
 - "But why not—what was it?"
- "It was no much; whilst I remember a bit, but most times I make it up as I go on."
- "Curiouser and curiouser," thought I, immensely interested. Then—"Do you write it down?" I asked. Who knew, he might be a yet unknown

Burns, and I—even I—the means of introducing him to an enthusiastic world, satiated alike by the prosy poetry and poetical prose of certain "of our own day"; but I was doomed to disappointment, for—

"No," answered the mate tranquilly; "I just spits 'em out!" After all, perhaps it is as well, and might indeed be better if many did the same; for now Swinburne has sung his soul free, the poetry of other days, fresh and spontaneous as a bird's song, seems to be dead or sleeping, and "literary efforts" to take its place but poorly.

Charlotte is fond of poetry, too, but only when she is sad and the world seems a cold and empty place. She uses it to stuff up all the empty corners and crannies of her life, not regarding it in the least as the best part of life itself, the golden warp to the drab woof of everyday existence. We have an odd little collection of books here with us; —Maurice Maeterlinck's "Life of the Bee" and "Treasure of the Humble," Marcus Aurelius, and Sir Thomas Browne's "Religio Medici," the "Romaunt de Rose," and "The Little Flowers of St. Francis Assisi," in the Temple Classics editions. We were presented with a lot of modern novels and magazines before we left, but of them the officers and crew reap the greatest benefit, for they

are for the most part quite out of tune with the rest of our environment. In truth we read but little, though perhaps we think more, and brood less, than we have ever done in our lives before. Still, the following passage, which Charlotte read to me the other day out of "The Little Flowers," seems to my present mood so delightful that I have read and re-read it till I nearly know it by heart:

"Impressed by God," says St. Francis, "St. Anthony went one day to the river-side hard by the sea; and standing thus upon the bank betwixt the river and the sea, began to speak after the manner of a preacher sent by God unto the fishes: 'Hear the word of God, O ye fishes of the sea and of the river, since the infidel heretics refuse to hear it.' And when he had thus spoken. forthwith there came unto him to the bank a multitude of fishes, great and small, and those between, that never in that sea or in that river had been seen so great a multitude; and they all held up their heads above the water and all stood attentive towards the face of St. Anthony, one and all in much great peace and gentleness and order; for in front and more anigh the bank stood the smaller fish, and behind them stood the fish of middle size; further behind, where deep water was, the greater fish stood. Therewith, the

fishes being thuswise set in order, St. Anthony began solemnly to preach, and thus spake: 'My brothers, the fish, much are ye bounden, so far as in ye lies, to give thanks to our Creator, who has given you so noble an element for your abode; in such sort that as it pleaseth you, ye have a sweet water and salt; and hath given you many a refuge to escape the storms withal: nay more, hath given you a clear, translucent element, and food by which ye may live.'

"At these and the like words of St. Anthony the fishes began to open their mouths and bow their heads, and with these and other signs of reverence, in such fashion as best they might, gave praise to God.

"And so great was the fervour of the fish," St. Francis goes on to tell us in his quaintly devout fashion, "that all the heretics by their very wonder and admiration were brought to conversion and a knowledge of the truth. And this done, St. Anthony bade the fishes depart with the blessing of God, and all went thence with marvellous signs of joy, and likewise the people also."

A writer that we both agree that we could read here is Pierre Loti, and I only wish that I had brought some of his books with me; they would,

I feel, fit into our thought, as old words will at times to a new tune. I shall never forget reading "Les Pêcheurs d'Islands" many years ago, when I was staying at St. Ives, in Cornwall. I used to take it out with me to the sands, at the fishing end of the town, where all the boats were pulled up, and read, a little at the time, and talk to the men who were, as it seemed, playing at work, in the true leisurely Cornish fashion, with nets and boats; and watch the glistening, changing light over the bay, and the tide creeping up across the sands, and the grey church-tower and the grey old town; atmosphere and sea and sand all alike lavender-tinted, save for the highlypainted boats, and many-coloured garments hung to dry, fluttering all along the quay and sands and out from every window. The fishermen were English and not French, but still there was as little difference between them and the fisherman of the Islands, who lounged and smoked just in the same leisurely fashion, as there would be, I feel, between the life drawn in "Le Matelot" and the life here. Narrow, crooked streets and many steps, grey homes, huddled one against another, the russet sails spread out to dry—I seem to see it all, and yet closer beneath my eyes those magic books, holding between their flimsy yellow

paper covers such pictures of the sea and its moods, such a breath of pungent, clear air, such a roar of the deep sea and whisper of waves on the shingle, intermingled with the desultory talk of the men and the clink of the women's knittingneedles. These are all books to be read very close to the sea, as one feels that they must have been written.

CHAPTER XI

- "Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt down,
 "Twas sad as sad could be;
 And we did speak only to break
 The silence of the sea.
- "Day after day, day after day,
 We struck nor breath nor motion,
 As idle as a painted ship
 Upon a painted ocean."

 COLERIDGE.

It has been another blazing hot day, but the sky has lifted, the air is clear enough to breathe, the sun is out, and in spite of the heat we have been feeling vastly contented with ourselves and life in general, and not in the least in sympathy with the Captain's longing for a wind "to push her on a bit." There must, however, be a little air somewhere, though against us, for this morning a big four-masted ship came lolloping slowly over the western horizon, and then hung up in the calm, about a mile to our stern, signalling herself as homeward bound from Brazil.

The excitement on board our ship was intense.

Though for over a month we had been traversing a part of the Atlantic which is in truth a thick maze of steamship routes, not a sail, not a funnel had we seen, not one single sign of alien life indeed, beyond that one solitary wild-duck. Then suddenly we were in a whirl—life had never seemed more busy, more crowded, more full of thrilling possibilities in the very heart of London. We were in touch with the world again—anything might happen—and we did up our hair, realizing that the people on the other ship could certainly see up as plainly with their telescopes as we could see them with ours: probably more so, for I do not suppose for a moment that their hands shook "Who knows." said with sheer excitement. Charlotte, in an almost awed whisper; "there might be someone we know on board her." I did not jeer at my friend because of the note of hope in her voice, nor did I remark to her that our one idea had been to escape from people we knew, or that it was scarcely likely, as we had no acquaintances in Brazil, that any could be returning from thence in a sailing-ship, though my forbearance arose merely from the very simple fact that I felt exactly as she did about it, all stirred up by expectancy and that strange gregarious instinct which never quite dies out of us;

so that meeting in some strange place people we have once known, or who have known people that we have known, or lived in places where we have lived, we are at once all interest and good-fellowship, without the least pause to remember how boresome such meetings have before proved, when the first gush is over.

After some conversation with flags the Captain inquired if the strange vessel would take letters home for us, and on her answering in the affirmative we all rushed off to get our writing materials, and busied ourselves with brief letters, as there was no knowing when a wind might spring up and our mail-ship depart. While we wrote the lifeboat was launched, with six men and boys at the oars and the mate at the stern to steer. Charlotte and I implored to be allowed to go, but the Captain would not hear of it, for the sky had a curious brassy look, and he was afraid that a wind might spring up before we could get back; and, after all, it must have been frightfully hot in that small boat on the open sea, for even under the awning it was really intense during the midday. So we consoled ourselves with claret-and-soda on the poop-deck, feeling such an event as this interview with a strange ship was a sort of party and worthy of celebration; while for the men who

were out grilling in the boat on the open sea we prepared bottles of beer wrapped in wet towels, and set in the draught of the alley-way from the saloon to cool.

A queer old Dutchman, who looks as if he had been cut out of a piece of particularly coarsegrained and knotty wood, and who is known by everybody as "Kruger," was at the wheel the greater part of the afternoon, watching our revels with a thirsty eye. I took him the largest possible tumbler of shandy-gaff and came to the conclusion that his neck must have been all throat, for he did not seem to swallow at all, but emptied the whole of it with one tip into his capacious mouth, like emptying a bucket, without moving a muscle of his rugged old face. Only as he handed back the tumbler to me did he give one deep sigh of satisfaction, while his eyes closed for a moment with an expression of the most complete ecstasy.

Of course, when the boat came back, such a slow-moving spot on that great waste of blue, and had been hauled up and made fast in the chocks again, we deluged the poor mate, as he sat drinking his beer, with a perfect flood of questions. At last, as our breath somewhat gave way, and we realized that we had been doing all the talking,



the Captain asked him if he had told the skipper that there were ladies on board his boat.

"I did that," answered the sturdy Scot, fixing his blue eyes with an air of the deepest melancholy on his empty mug, and pushing his cap farther back on his damp forehead, as though in hopes that it had obscured his vision in some way.

"I suppose he said he reckoned you had to mind your p's and q's now?" laughed the Captain.

"He said that it must be a fine nuisance," responded the mate bluntly, still occupied with his empty mug:

"And what did you answer?" I interposed, thinking that here was the chance of a compliment even from a Scotchman. I might have known better, for the only reply I got from him, as he turned his mug upside down with a plaintive air of finality, was:

"Aye, I told him that it was just gey awk-'ard."

Afterwards I took the gallant sailor to task for this speech, but he stuck to his guns like a man.

"Well, it is just terrible awk'ard," he persisted. "I was fair mad when I heard there were lady passengers coming, not but what I'm getting

to like you well enough myself now;" which was the nearest approach to a compliment I have ever got from him.

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There was a perfect downpour of tropical rain last night, and all the buckets on the poop being full of soft water, we took advantage of the occasion to have a great washing-day, a thing which is impossible on ordinary occasions, as the water has to be dealt out with a careful hand, and we are put on an allowance of so much each per day. It must have been an amusing sight, the Captain, the mate, three men passengers and myself all with bare feet, and with sleeves rolled elbow high, washing pocket-handkerchiefs as if for dear life, though with decidedly more zeal than skill. sat cross-legged on a little footstool on deck in front of my bucket; but the men—to whom, with the immunity of their kind, backache seemed a thing unknown—stood over theirs and scrubbed and rubbed, and soaped and wrung, till it really seemed as if there would be nothing left to dry by the time they had finished. It was the gayest scene—the men in white clothes, the mate with the added attraction of a blue shirt, and Charlotte with a scarlet blouse, and dark skirt turned up over her white petticoat—rather with

a conscious eye to effect, I suspect; while the poop was crossed and re-crossed with strings all a-flutter with white and coloured handkerchiefs, the Captain showing us a cunning trick of half untwisting little pieces of the string at intervals all along it, inserting a corner of the handkerchief and letting it twist up again, so that no pegs or pins were needed.

It is the pleasantest, homeliest, most wholesome life I have ever known. From where I was sitting I could look down the whole length of the ship and see the sails swinging lazily against the intensely blue sky, with all of the Glasgow soot quite washed out of them. Some of the men were painting the ports with a vivid first coat of scarlet paint, while a couple more were busy graining the break of the poop with yellow ochre, supposed to represent oak. A couple of sheep and numerous cocks and hens paraded the main-deck, keeping up a constant farmyard chatter, and up in the rigging some apprentices were overhauling foot-ropes and singing at their work. The fo'c'sle-head, like the poop, was hung with washing, mostly blue of every shade, while the shadows of the sails on the deck were of the purest indigo. Some of the men, busied over what I could not see, were singing a famous old chanty; a boyish voice, belonging, l

think, to a young Highlander, taking the solo, with a chorus of deeper tones:

Solo: "Oh, Shenadoah, I love your daughter!" Chorus: "Away, my rolling river!" Solo: "Oh, Shenadoah, I long to hear you!" Chorus: "Ah! ah! we're bound away 'Cross the wide Missouri!"

Solo: "The ship sails free, a gale is blowing."
Chorus: "Away, my rolling river!"
Solo: "The brace's taut, the sheet's a-flowing."
Chorus: "Ah! ah! we're bound away
"Cross the wide Missouri!"

Solo: "Oh, Shenadoah, I'll ne'er forget you!"
Chorus: "Away, my rolling river!"
Solo: "Till I die, I'll love you ever."
Chorus: "Ah! ah! we're bound away
'Cross the wide Missouri!"

The tune seemed to swing out to the lazy roll of the vessel, as soothing to us children of larger growth as the swing of the cradle and the goodnight lullaby is to an infant. The whole of our little world seemed so compact, so free from the wearisome petty troubles that come from crowds, so full of light and colour, that I felt I could hardly sufficiently gather up every crumb of it, as an antidote against the future, and all it may yet bring.

On our starboard a white-sailed, five-masted ship, on the easterly tack, was hovering like a butterfly just across the horizon, that first ship we saw

yesterday morning seeming to have broken our spell of solitude. We neither of us ever saw so large a sailing-ship before, and only wished that she would come a little nearer. America, the Captain tells us, is turning out many such ships now, disproving altogether our old notion, that wind-jammers were becoming obsolete. These monsters, some even six-masted, are schooner-rigged fore and aft, and have an immense carrying capacity. Could any flying be better than being in such a vessel, with all her sails full set, scudding along before the Trades—that's the way I, for one, would like to go to heaven.

"Oh, I love old Ocean's smile,
I love old Ocean's frowning;
I love old Ocean all the while—
My prayer's for death by drowning."

Cannot one imagine sailing in some such vessel to those harbours of immortal peace of which the old Scandinavian Sagas sing, where winter never comes, and where the sheep, with their lambs beside them, browse ever in grassy meadows, embowered among deep-bosomed hills?

The sky that had lifted for a while and put us in such a good humour with its smiles, in spite of the heat, has gathered into a thick blanket of dense grey; still we are moving a little, a very little, and

the Captain thinks that in another numbe of days we shall be clear of the Doldrinns and the jagged edge of the about-ring which makes them so oppressive, and may hope for some elasticity, some breathing space away from this dense wall of air, where one has much the same feeling as among a close-packed mowel. The atmosphere seems so horribly tangible; it is like but human bodies pressing upon one, and for the first time I understand Job's words: "He looked to the earth, and seeth under the whole heaven, to make the weight for the winds, and He weigheth the waters by measure." I am sure the air here might be weighed against the water and found in no wit wanting.

Some writer has likened this oppressive atmosphere, under which we are all groaning, to an immense atmospherical heart, the ring itself and the belt of clouds which it overshadows taking the part both of the auricle and ventricle. The great heart throbs and throbs, up and down, up and down, never still, gathering up and condensing huge quantities of vapour, and devouring the Trade Winds, that rush in upon it from north to with laden with warm air, which must push its way upwards, clear of the cloud, before it can even begin to cool by radiation, while the vapours it has

brought in its train condense on the lower surface, while the sun plays down on the upper surface of the throbbing mass, till it and the air around it are alike gorged, and the surplus hot moisture discharged from the heart over the whole body of the earth. It is, indeed, as if in this cloud-ring dynamical strength was gathered, and sufficient impulse given to the air to ensure its circulation. One may imagine how in all this coming and going, this rush of hot vapours upwards through the cloud, this condensation, this blazing sun overhead, and these gorged vapours which seek for release, the cloud itself becomes the scene of turgid agitation; so that when an electrical discharge takes place, the thunder echoes on from cloudridge to cloud-ridge, from valley to valley, while the scarcely condensed vapour falls in this unceasing drizzle, moving ever with the steady persistent beat, north and south, south and north, of this great heart of our world—the merest undulation as one measures the distance on the earth's surface.

As a natural phenomenon I am exceedingly interested in this strange region, but as an acquaintance I am beginning to weary of it, and think that I could have arranged it all in some less intricate, and yet just as effective a fashion, without all the attendant disagreeables. The barometer, they say,

stands lower under this cloud-ring than anywhere else, and to-day mine has fallen proportionately, for the heat is beginning to try Charlotte terribly. She says if only she could take one deep breath of clear air, deep enough to fill her lungs, she would be all right, but that she feels like a fish out of water; and I really believe that we need gills in a place like this, and not lungs at all, for the air has a density which they seem quite incapable of grappling with or struggling against—in truth, we have ceased to struggle, and thence our misery, for if all our restless flappings did nothing else, they certainly stirred the air around us and diverted our thoughts a little.

CHAPTER XII

"Man that is born of woman

Has very little time to live:

He comes up like a fore-topmast staysail

And down like a small flying jib."

Old Song.

THE Captain was telling me a strange story this morning as we sat together on the skylight, he with his beloved pipe between his lips, and on his knees his inseparable companion, the cat, whose coat he meditatively stroked the wrong way all the time he was speaking, a thing "Boy" would by no manner of means submit to from anyone else. The conversation had drifted round in a desultory sort of way to the subject of the supernatural, and a Scotchman's special prerogative, second sight, which the Captain said reminded him of a strange case which had come under his own notice.

"It was when I was an apprentice," he began meditatively, taking a long pull at his pipe; "and happened one night in the second mate's watch, when it was blowing enough to split every bit of canvas on the ship to ribbons—indeed, it did rip up

the main-sail like a bit of paper that very night. Well, close on eight bells the man on the lookout, a great big Highlander, over six feet high, sang out that there was a light right ahead. Of course, the mate went straight up to the foc's'le and peered out, but not a sign of a light was there; and then, equally of course, he rounded on the man for singing out like that when there was nothing to be seen. However, the fellow stood so persistently to his word that the mate lingered on till the First came on watch, when he called him up to have a look too, but he swore there was nothing there, though by this time the Highlander was pretty near frantic, declaring that the light was crossing backward and forward across the bows, and that it foreboded some ill-luck to the ship or death to someone on it; and so impressed was the man that he could hardly be persuaded to go off to his watch below, though that's a thing they are generally nippy enough about doing.

"It was a queer night, I remember, with heavy dark clouds like a wall on the weather side, and zigzag streams of lightning shooting up out of the horizon, while the wind boomed in heavy gusty roars as if a hurricane were upon us, a dirty enough night without any Highland spooks to make it worse.

"Next morning, however, it had cleared up completely, and I was sitting up in the sun smoking my pipe in front of the apprentice's door, which was well in the middle of the main-deck, while a lot of the men were lolling about round me smoking and drinking their coffee, when out blunders a Dutch fellow we had on board, as hardened an old case as ever you set eyes on, with his face the colour of a bit of paper, and all grown loose and flabby as a fleshy fellow's will if he's in a fright.

"There he stood right in front of us, with the mazed sort of look that people has when they come suddenly out of the darkness into a bright light, his mouth dropped open as if he was going to say something, though never a word came, till one of the fellows sang out to ask him what in the world was he standing there staring at us all like that for. Then he spoke, in a voice which seemed to be in some sort of way strangled out of him.

"'Mein Gott!' he said, 'I've had such a dream' and then he gave a sort of sharp cry as if the words were fair choked out of him—'I dreamt I saw a funeral—here, o' board this very ship, mates——'

"'Well,' put in one of the fellows, with a laugh, rising to his feet and spitting out his quid, as eight bells sounded, and it was his turn to go on watch, 'I reckon there's nothing so mighty terrible in

that. They say on shore, I mind, that to dream of a funeral means a wedding, so look out for yourself when we get on shore, my lad.'

"But the Dutchman took no notice of their chaff—only his face twitched a little, and I saw his hand opening and shutting nervously.

"'It was a real funeral,' he persisted doggedly, 'and the main-topsail laid to the mast and all; while a corpse was out on the main hatch, with the ensign over him, but he weren't sewn up in anything, an' a puff of wind just caught the corner of it as I wur lookin' and twitched it clean off.'

"'Oh, stow that!' put in the same man again, a great rough fellow, with no more nerves than a bull. 'We've heard just about enough of your funerals, and your bally corpses; I suppose you'll be telling us next who the stiff un was.'

"'Yes,' answered the man, half sullenly, and his face looked livid in the growing sunlight—'I saw 'im plain enough, an' it wur'—here he hesitated, with a great shudder that seemed to shake him from head to foot, and jerked out the next word almost with a shout—'saw 'im, mein Gott, I saw 'im plain enough, mates, and it wau me—me, lads, that there corpse a-lyin' out on this main hatch.'

"And here the fellow began to laugh, like a man who laughs to keep himself from going raving mad

with fear—a horrible enough laugh, too; but there was no more to be heard then, for at that moment the mate sung out for someone to go up and bend the main-sail, and off went the Dutchman, up aloft like a cat—as if all he wanted was to get away from himself and his own thoughts just as quickly as he could.

"Well, the fellow was always a daring devil for a Dutchman, and never seemed to pay much attention to what he was about, going at it as if nothing mattered a hang to him, having, in fact, got such a reputation that none of the elder men cared to go up aloft with him if they could well get out of it. And that day he just seemed as if he didn't care for anything except driving that dream out of his head by some sort of work, but just went slap-dash at what was to be done; and getting on to the main-yard with his robands in his hand, took five of them and rove them through the eyelet in the head of the sail and round the jack-stay, and then, with his knees on the yard, got hold of them in both hands and began pullingthrowing his whole weight into them so suddenly that the sharp friction broke them, and he came down with a sickening thud on to the main-deck, almost at my feet.

"The suddenness of it all, for there didn't seem

a moment between seeing him running up the rigging and lying there horribly flat and still, stunned me so that I was just too sick and dazed with horror to even sing out, till the mate came and bent over him, then called to me to help and try and lift him. But there was little enough for us or anyone else to do for the poor fellow, for he was just smashed all down one side, as completely as if it had been done with a mallet—shoulder, arm, thigh, and legs—and all he could do was just to beg and pray us, for God's sake, to throw him overboard and put him out of his misery, for he was done for. Well, we could see that plain enough, and knew that the kindest thing would be not to bother him or move him about more than could possibly be helped; so a couple of men just lifted him and laid him on the main hatch, out of the wet-for we were shipping a good bit of sea at the time—and covered him up with a blanket to keep the sun off him. Poor fellow! I couldn't help thinking when I saw his face staring up over the edge of that blanket how horribly true his dream had come; and he thought of it too, I could tell that plain enough, for his face was twitching with something more than pain; while the big Highlander, who had seen the light the night before, stood and looked down at him, the

two of them never saying a word, but just looking straight into each other's eyes for some moments, as if there was some queer bond of knowledge between them, different as they were in everything else.

"'The light,' said the Scotchman at last, half under his breath; 'I knew it meant someone, but I dinna rightly ken who.'

"He spoke so low that I hardly thought the other man could have heard him, but he did, for he just gave a little nod with his head and caught his breath with a sort of sob of pain or fear—I don't know which; and he died before twelve o'clock, so that we buried him that night. It was a mighty queer thing, anyhow, with the dream and all."

"The light and then the dream—it was strange. One wonders what they had to do with each other. Were the men particular friends?"

"Not that I know of, and I've often wondered what it all meant, but there's few things in this world that don't mean something. And another odd thing about it all was that the poor fellow had been on the ship two or three voyages, and got the best bunk of any in the men's quarters. Well, one after another tried sleeping in it after he had gone, but they never tried it twice. They said that, good as the bunk was, there wasn't room for

two in it, and until that Dutchman settled down in his new quarters he seemed sort of ways to expect that bunk to be kept for him. Anyhow, he wouldn't let anyone else rest in it, but turned in every night, no matter who was there—at least, something, something horrible, bringing a breath of cold salt air with it, wet and shivering, seemed always beside them.

"I remember another odd case of the same sort of thing happening to myself," went on the Captain, after a pause, carefully refilling his pipe for the sequel. "The whole of one night, during my watch on deck, I felt just awfully scared and nervous, in a sort of way that I had never felt before, and for no reason whatever, as far as I could see. I had a sort of idea, though, that one did not feel that way for nothing, and I thought to myself, I'll be pretty careful if I have to go up aloft to-night.

"Well, as it happened, I didn't have to, and one bell was just sounding, while I, rather hauling myself over the coals for giving way to silly fancies, was standing on the poop-deck by the mate's side, when down came the spanker gaff, struck the spanker boom, and, shooting off it like a spear, just grazed the mate's shoulder and cut down at an acute angle right through the deck

clean into the saloon; while the vangs crashed down upon the wheel just beside me, doing no more than giving me a bruised shoulder, and not even touching the man who was steering. I'm not a superstitious man, but I must say that I don't like those uncanny sort of feelings; they never come for nothing, and they fair torment me out of my senses sometimes, wondering what they have come for."

"Then up came our mate as bold as brass—
'What ho, merman!' says he;
'If the truth should be told, it's to see your Captain bold,
I've a favour for to ask of he.'
The Captain came to the good ship's side,
And he looked away down in the sea;
Says he, 'My little man, just tell me if you can,
What's the favour that you want of me!'

Chorus.

"Blow, ye winds-high-low, etc.

"'Oh, you've dropped your anchor in front of my house,
And in front of my only door;
And my wife can't get out for to walk about,
Nor my children—two, three, four.
'Twould break your heart for to hear them shout;
What a row they've had with me!
For I've been out all night, at a big sea-fight,
In the bottom of the deep blue sea.'

Chorus.

"Blow, ye winds-high-low, etc.

"'The anchor shall be hove up at once,
And your chicks and your wife set free;
But I never saw a winkle, from a sprat to a whale,
That could talk like that to me.
Your figure-head is a seaman bold,
And your voice is an Englishman's,
So come, my little man, just tell me if you can,
Where did you get that tail?'

Chorus.

"Blow, ye winds-high-low, etc.

"'Some years ago, in a ship here about,
I was washed overboard in a gale;
And away down below, where the seaweeds grow,
I spied a maid with a tail.
She saved my life, I made her my wife,
And my feet changed in-stant-ly;
So I mar-ie-er-aid this mer-ee-maid
At the bottom of the deep blue sea.'

Chorus.

"Blow, ye winds—high—low, Blow, ye winds—high—low; Clear away with the morning dawn, And blow, ye winds—high—low."

CHAPTER IX

"I will example you with thievery:
The sun's a thief, and with his great attraction
Robs the vast sea: the moon's an arrant thief,
And her pale fire she snatches from the sun:
The sea's a thief whose liquid surge resolves
The moon into salt tears."

Timon of Athens.

THE Captain was right in distrusting that blueand-white day, for it was followed by a spell of unsettled, squally weather. But now it is absolutely halcyon again—the blue of the sky unbroken by a cloud, the sea by the faintest fleck of white. We are just moving, perhaps a couple of knots an hour, and the sails are flapping idly, with a truly patrician air of doing nothing with grace—though, in fact, like most idlers, they are wearing themselves to shreds.

We are getting near the tropics, and some of the good new sails, which are kept for the rougher latitudes, are being taken down, and old, patched sails bent in their place. Mercifully it is smooth and still, for bending a big square sail in the teeth

of a wind—as has to be done sometimes when a sail splits—must be a terrific task. As it is, it is delightful to lie back and watch the men's figures against the blue sky and the spread of the great creamy sail. In bending a new sail it is first run up by means of block and gaunt-line till the bunt is well above the yard, and then spread along the jackstay, the ear-rings being then passed by the men at the yard-arms. Bunt-lines and leech-lines are clinched, and the head of the sail fastened to the jackstay with rovings—short lengths of rope yarn—and the sheet and clew-line shackled on to the clew—the extreme corner of the sail—the sheet running free on a block. When the sail is to be furled it is run up by the leech and bunt lines and made fast to the jackstay—an iron bar running along the top of the yard—by the gaskets, little short ropes which are tied round the furled This is only a tiny bit of the work of the day, which, like all other days, is full to overflowing; there seems to be always something happening on board a "wind-jammer," always something waiting to be done, and that quickly. Before you can say "Jack Robinson" one piece of work is finished and the whole watch seem to be suddenly at something else, painting, or setting sail, or shifting yards—which reminds me that I

97

have for the first time come across that classical personage the original Jack Robinson in a song that the mate entertained us with the other day. I have tried to make him sing it slowly, so that I may take the words down. But if he sings it slowly he seems to lose the thread of the song, and it is only the two last verses, which tell of the jilting of this historical personage, and are sung with a funereal drawl, that I have been able to catch precisely.

"Says the lady, says she, 'I've changed my state.'
"Why, you don't mean,' says Jack, 'that you've got a mate?
You know you promised me.' Says she, 'I couldn't wait,
For no tidings could I gain of you, Jack Robinson.'

"'But to fret and to stew about it's all in vain:
I'll get a ship and go to Holland, France, or Spain;
No matter where—to Portsmouth I'll ne'er come again.'
And he was off afore you could say 'Jack Robinson.'"

"I never saw a more unmistakable sailor than the mate is," I said to the Captain the other evening as we sat on the skylight of the saloon; "he must have been just born to it, as I believe you were."

"Ay, there's something in that, and the old salts have a saying for it," answered the Captain. "'Tell my mother I'm a hard case,' they say; born in the maintops, brought up in the fore t'gallant cross-trees, every hair in my head is a

rope yarn, every finger in my hand a marlingspike, every bone in my body a capstan-bar, and every drop of blood in my veins Stockholm tar. Tell my mother I'm a hard case, and sleep in the upper bunk.'"

- "That's you," whispered Charlotte maliciously from the far side of me, "even to the upper bunk, and—well, as for the material of that pigtail——"But I kicked her violently, and she was silent. The Captain thinks us quite mad enough as it is.
- "You can't give me notice to quit here on the high seas," I told her later; "so I can do what I like."
- "I'll dock your pay for insubordination," asserted Charlotte grandly.
- "Yes, my child, you could; and the worst of it is that I shouldn't care a tinker's dam."
- "My dear Crabsticks, your language is getting almost beyond words."
- "Well, perhaps the sooner it does get beyond words the better; but that isn't language—that's merely a technical expression: a tinker's dam is only——"
- "The same as any other man's damn, I expect," responded my liege lady; "but joking apart, dear, you really must be careful. The mate says that when the Captain heard there were ladies

coming on board for this voyage, he gathered them all together and declared that there must simply be no swearing aft of the deck-house."

"Oh, I must tell you: they say confession is good for the soul. The other day up here, the men were muddling something awfully, and the Captain was tramping up and down shouting at them, and in between snapping his teeth, as though to mince up his language small before it came out. Then suddenly it became too much for him; the men were trying to get the sheets in without the capstan, the second mate among them, and the man at the pin didn't turn it quickly enough -I thought the first man was through the port-'Turn it-turn it!' yelled the Captain. But there was Johnson at the pin—that big Norwegian with the scar on his head—and he seemed somehow to get muddled, for he missed it at the slack, and the "Old Man" snapped his teeth —then he let it run. The Captain said, 'Go to hell!' in Hindustani, and like a flash it came back to me—fancy, after all these years! So I capped it with 'and stay there,' in the same lingo. You should have seen his face! He grew quite crimson, and then he said, half laughing, 'You had me there, Miss Adair.'

"And I said: 'That's a rhyme, and it's lucky.

But really I wouldn't trouble so much if I were you: we are quite used to it. I often do it myself, and it really is such a relief.'

- "And he said: 'What, rhyming?'
- "And I said: 'No.'"
- "And then?"
- "Oh, that ended it for the time—the sail was flapping, you know, like fury—but I think he's felt more at his ease with us since."
- "I don't know if it's right," sighed Charlotte, who is afflicted with a tender conscience, which is as much a matter of a skin or two as a tendency to blush. "We might influence them for good, you know."
- "You influence everybody for good, my darling, but it is your eyes and not your morals that do it." And she did not contradict, for being another woman it was no good her telling me that she'd rather have a beautiful character than beautiful eyes.

To-day the awning is up on the poop-deck, and Charlotte is swinging lazily in a hammock beneath its shade; while I wander restlessly from port to starboard, watching the little flotillas of nautilus, or Portuguese men-of-war as the sailors call them, which dot the placid sea, each with its tiny sail making the very best of the air, which is

more like the peaceful breath of a child than an ocean breeze. They are such lovely wee things, these "men-of-war," in curve and shade like the - petals of some fragile, violet-tinted orchid. They might, indeed, with their delicate silken sails, be the state barges of Titania herself—those silken sails which are furled so tightly when the wind rises to anything more robust than this gentle sighing, that is half a caress. Purple and fine linen, indeed, is this tiny creature clothed in, and fashioned by the master carver with as much thought as would serve for the making of a world. What a life! To sail and sail and sail in these wonderful tropical seas, with a beauty that fits its sunniest mood like a smile, and a strength that can yet hold its own against the wildest fury of wind and wave.

In strange contrast to this blossom of the sea is a great shark, which is hanging about our bows, the only one that we have seen as yet this voyage. He was first caught sight of by a man up in the rigging, who called out to tell us the news, on which we all rushed to the taffrail and leant over it to gaze at this Nero of the deep, who was sulking about at a little distance from the ship, having sent on ahead his intrepid little pilot to spy out the land.

What a strange thing the law of attraction is! It seems almost incredible that a little inoffensive fish, such as this pilot is, should be chosen out by this fierce gluttonous shark for his lifelong companion, and treated, too, far better than many an East-Ender treats his wife. Is he a true comrade, or is he a serf who wins protection by his unswerving devotion? Or is the solution of the bond to be found in that inexplicable fascination that the guilty holds for the innocent, the unquestioning devotion to an idol who may be a very Moloch for all that the worshipper cares? The very young sharks do not seem to possess these pages in waiting; perhaps they are only won, as a knight wins his spurs, by deeds of prowess, or perhaps they do not attract them till they attain their full growth and ferocity. If so, how does the aspirant for the post of pilot make known his wishes before he is gobbled up by his intended patron, is a question to which I can find no answer.

Once established, though, the little pilot seems safe enough, and in return for his services, without which his purblind master would be helpless indeed, he is allowed to creep in under him for safety, and even, as some say, to take refuge between his great jaws, which is, for the most

part, a bourne from which no traveller returns, though some of the African tribes do look on a shark's gullet as the direct road to heaven.

We threw a lump of pork overboard this morning, and the gallant pilot swam up to it, sniffed round it several times, then returned to report "all's well," I suppose, for his master swam up and snapped it down greedily, though when another and yet larger piece was thrown over, this time garnished with hooks, he was warned off and dropped sulkily astern. The Captain says he has known a poor little pilot, whose patron has been shot or caught, follow in the wake of the ship for days and days, a humble enough mourner, yet perhaps a more sincere one than many of us are likely to have.

The sea is so smiling to-day, it is difficult to realize what a terrible record of carnage it bears locked away for ever in its bosom. How many men, who "have suffered a sea change into something rare and strange," lie beneath its surface, and gallant ships, too, in and out of whose bare ribs dart the weird deep-sea fish, living always in an unutterable calm, an unchangeable temperature.

"Methought I saw a thousand fearful wrecks; A thousand men that fishes gnawed upon; Wedges of gold, great anchors, heaps of pearl, Inestimable stones, unvalued jewels—

All scattered in the bottom of the sea. Some lay in dead men's skulls; and in those holes Where eyes did once inhabit, these were crept, As 'twere in scorn of eyes reflecting gems."

Shakespeare, for all he lived so far from it, knew the temper of the sea well—as he did, oddly enough, the phraseology of sailing-ships. "The sea's a thief," he says; and rightly enough too, for not only men and ships fall victims to its maw, but the so-called solid earth itself.

There is a tiny place on the Suffolk coast, whose name I cannot remember, now the merest hamlet, which was yet in the time of Edward the Confessor an exceedingly flourishing port, and might be so still, had not the greedy sea devoured at one gulp seven churches and a monastery, a great highway, two gaols, and many other buildings like the "bigbellied Ben" of the old jingle who "eat the church, and eat the steeple, eat the priest and all the people."

The island of Stepney, too, it has eaten away; nibbling insidiously around it, as a mouse nibbles at some tasty morsel of cheese, so that the church at Minster, which used to be nearly in the middle of the island, is now on the very shore; while in other places on the English shores, particularly on the East Coast, the old church bells ring deep beneath the waves, far out to sea.

Many ancient writers tell a strange story of an

island, that Plato spoke of by the name of Atlantus, and which, they declared, lay opposite to the Straits of Gibraltar, reporting it as fruitful and populous, a place from which many warlike chiefs made frequent raids upon Europe and Northern Africa. But at length the hungry sea devoured it, helped by a marine earthquake, and its place was known no more, a fate which I have often heard prophesied for the little island of Mauritius, which was shot out of the sea—quite lately as geologists count time—a mere seething mass of rock, and lava and smoke.

To-day in latitude 22° 6' north and longitude 24°7' west, we have caught the North-East Trades, just below the Calm Belt of Cancer, known even now as the Horse Latitude, from the fact of the ships carrying horses to the West Indies having so often to throw them overboard in this belt of wearying, windless calms.

The Trades here do not appear to be governed by any such laws of the Medes and Persians as people seem to imagine, and the Captain tells me that, oddly enough, in common with the weather over all the rest of the globe, they seem to be getting more and more uncertain; but in any case in March they are very variable between latitudes 20° and 30° north, blowing most steadily during

the months of May, June, August, and September; though in longitude 35° west, and between the parallels 10° and 15° north, they blow consistently enough, excepting in July, August, September, and October, when they are apt to vary a little to the east of the same latitude.

From the Line to 12° north of it, according to the time of year, lies a region torn by the meeting of the South-West Monsoons and North-Easterly Trades, a region of uncertain winds, of ever restless seas, of thunder, lightning, rain and general misery; a region where it seems as if Nature drew her breath in gasping horror at the conflict of her children—that conflict enblematic of the eternal struggle between the North and South; a region to which learned men have given the name of equatorial calms, but which sailors call by the far more expressive appellation of "the Doldrums." In a steamer one runs merrily through it, undisturbed by any of its whimsies; but it still remains for us to experience it in a sailing-ship, which by all accounts may swing there nearly stationary for weeks, while the oily water around grows thick with the ship's débris, and one whistles in vain for a wind, willing to welcome open-armed any witch, be she never so repulsive a hag, who would sell a fair breeze "in the corner of a napkin wrapped."

Our first month at sea is over, and the men's advance of pay has expired. It is a solemn occasion, and this evening has been marked by an equally solemn festivity, the "Dead Horse" being buried with all ceremony. Charlotte and I watched the proceeding entirely fascinated by it all; the round circle of the sea and the translucent sky, like a clear, concave globe above it, its beauty intensified by that strange hush of evening which is so intensely marked at sea, though why I scarcely know, for there are no birds to cease their songs as the sun sets. The sails grew dark against the clear sky, the golden haze gathered, and the silence gathered also, till one could almost hear one's own heart beat, then suddenly it was broken by the deep tones of men singing, and a procession of strangely attired figures swept round the deck from the fo'c'sle, headed by Jimmy Ducks, the cook's boy, astride on a wooden horse and drawn by four of the men, with beards of oakum reaching to their knees. It reminded me of a painting by Rembrandt in its tints, but it reminded me also of Homer, and the brave men he sang of; of Jason and the voyage of the Argo; and of the siege of Troy and the wooden horse; while the light was so elusive that the masts and rigging might well have been well overlaid with gold and the sails of purple silk.

We heard the voices before we saw the men, the swinging, haunting melody of the ridiculous old chanty, sung so truly and well in the men's deep full-chested sailor voices:

> "For they say so, and they hope so, Oh-h-h-h, poor old man!"

Another moment or two and the dim line of men swept round by the galley; the wooden horse and its escort, at first no more than a blurred silhouette of browns, russets, blues, and greens, till gradually the mystic steed with its fancied halo of old romance revealed itself as a wooden barrel, with a grotesquely-carved wooden head attached, caparisoned in a gaudy striped rug; and its rider as Jimmy Ducks beaming with pride, with cocked hat, streaming plume, and crimson mantle.

Twice the procession swept round the maindeck, bringing disillusion with its near approach, and enfolding itself again in mystery and beauty as it neared the fo'c'sle. Then the men gathered to a group below the main-mast, up which one of the boys ran and fixed a running rope to the end of the main-yard, ready for the last act of the tragic drama.

Poor old horse! The solemnity of his obsequies was somewhat marred by the weakness of his neck, which gave way when the rope was fixed to it, so

that the head careered off aloft by itself; but finally it was secured firmly round the body and swung high to the yard-end, when the rope was loosed, and it was dropped deep, deep to its last resting-place, symbolical of that well or ill spent month's pay; its funeral ode being chanted in a great deep bass voice by the hangman, the entire crew joining in the refrain:

"They call me Hanging Johnny, Away-a-a-ay, away-a-a-ay; Because I've hanged so many; Oh, hang, boys, hang!

"Of late I married a wife,
Away-a-a-ay, away-a-a-ay;
But our life was one of strife,
Oh, hang, boys, hang!
But I soon grew tired of her song;
For they call me Hanging Johnny,
Because I've hanged so many.

"So I hung her high on my gallows-tree,
Away-a-a-ay, away-a-a-ay;
But I'll never hang my Nanny,
Though they call me Hanging Johnny,
Because I've hanged so many.
Away-a-a-ay, away-a-a-ay;
Oh, hang, boys, hang!"

CHAPTER X

"Men say they know many things;
But lo! they have taken wings,—
The arts and sciences,
And a thousand appliances;
The wind that blows
Is all that anybody knows."
H. D. THOREAU.

We are only three degrees from the Line: so far the Fates, or rather the winds, have been moderately kind to us, but now they have fled away and left us to our fate, and there seems really no reason why we should not stay here for ever, rolling and wallowing in a sulky sea, which, unbroken by a single crest of foam, seems to come from every direction at once. It is hot, hotter than anything I have ever known before, and it is raining with a persistent drizzle, the whole affair reminding me of a Turkish bath in which the cold shower has gone wrong.

The men loll about in a costume consisting of shirt and trousers, while we too have doffed every

possible garment, finally discarding shoes and stockings, like the rest of them; indeed, at the moment of writing I have on a print blouse and skirt and one white petticoat with no vestige of starch left in it—to tell the truth, not much whiteness either—and nothing, literally nothing, else. At first, with very creditable modesty, we tucked our feet away under our skirts, but very soon, getting hardened by usage, stuck them out brazenly on the bars of our lounging chairs to get as much air as possible. We cannot even do our hair up; insufficient as mine is for the ordinary use of hair-dressing, it feels like a heavy mustard poultice if I attempt to pin it to my head, so I wear what Charlotte calls my "Georgian pigtail," and do not in the least envy her the two thick ropes of plaits that she swings impatiently over the back of her chair.

We have passed the second day of the Doldrums, and, finding it impossible even to sit still, wandered like lost spirits from bow to stern, panting for a breath of fresh air, and finally taking anchorage on the rail of the poop, where we perched with our feet in buckets of salt water, beside the three men passengers, looking, as the mate informs us, in our state of dank and bedraggled misery, like "a row o' drooked craws on a pailing."

It was too hot to-night for anyone to attempt to start a song, and we lingered till late up on the poop in dreamy silence, which was only broken now and then by a little crooning sound from the mate, who had draped himself over the taffrail by the rudder, on the lookout for sharks. The persistently recurring soft sound, that was not quite singing or quite speaking, went on for so long that at last my curiosity got the better of my indolence, and I dragged myself out of my chair to ask him what he was singing.

"I was nae singing," he answered placidly, but just saying a wee bit of a poem over to me'self."

In a moment I was all eagerness. I love poetry, perhaps because my life has so far been all prose, and I was hugely delighted to think that I had at last found a fellow-spirit.

- "Say it again—do say it again," I entreated, just as one used to in the old nursery days.
 - "I can no do that."
 - "But why not-what was it?"
- "It was no much; whilst I remember a bit, but most times I make it up as I go on."
- "Curiouser and curiouser," thought I, immensely interested. Then—"Do you write it down?" I asked. Who knew, he might be a yet unknown

Burns, and I—even I—the means of introducing him to an enthusiastic world, satiated alike by the prosy poetry and poetical prose of certain "of our own day"; but I was doomed to disappointment, for—

"No," answered the mate tranquilly; "I just spits 'em out!" After all, perhaps it is as well, and might indeed be better if many did the same; for now Swinburne has sung his soul free, the poetry of other days, fresh and spontaneous as a bird's song, seems to be dead or sleeping, and "literary efforts" to take its place but poorly.

Charlotte is fond of poetry, too, but only when she is sad and the world seems a cold and empty place. She uses it to stuff up all the empty corners and crannies of her life, not regarding it in the least as the best part of life itself, the golden warp to the drab woof of everyday existence. We have an odd little collection of books here with us; —Maurice Maeterlinck's "Life of the Bee" and "Treasure of the Humble," Marcus Aurelius, and Sir Thomas Browne's "Religio Medici," the "Romaunt de Rose," and "The Little Flowers of St. Francis Assisi," in the Temple Classics editions. We were presented with a lot of modern novels and magazines before we left, but of them the officers and crew reap the greatest benefit, for they

are for the most part quite out of tune with the rest of our environment. In truth we read but little, though perhaps we think more, and brood less, than we have ever done in our lives before. Still, the following passage, which Charlotte read to me the other day out of "The Little Flowers," seems to my present mood so delightful that I have read and re-read it till I nearly know it by heart:

"Impressed by God," says St. Francis, "St. Anthony went one day to the river-side hard by the sea; and standing thus upon the bank betwixt the river and the sea, began to speak after the manner of a preacher sent by God unto the fishes: 'Hear the word of God, O ye fishes of the sea and of the river, since the infidel heretics refuse to hear it.' And when he had thus spoken, forthwith there came unto him to the bank a multitude of fishes, great and small, and those between, that never in that sea or in that river had been seen so great a multitude; and they all held up their heads above the water and all stood attentive towards the face of St. Anthony, one and all in much great peace and gentleness and order; for in front and more anigh the bank stood the smaller fish, and behind them stood the fish of middle size; further behind, where deep water was, the greater fish stood. Therewith, the

fishes being thuswise set in order, St. Anthony began solemnly to preach, and thus spake: 'My brothers, the fish, much are ye bounden, so far as in ye lies, to give thanks to our Creator, who has given you so noble an element for your abode; in such sort that as it pleaseth you, ye have a sweet water and salt; and hath given you many a refuge to escape the storms withal: nay more, hath given you a clear, translucent element, and food by which ye may live.'

"At these and the like words of St. Anthony the fishes began to open their mouths and bow their heads, and with these and other signs of reverence, in such fashion as best they might, gave praise to God.

"And so great was the fervour of the fish," St. Francis goes on to tell us in his quaintly devout fashion, "that all the heretics by their very wonder and admiration were brought to conversion and a knowledge of the truth. And this done, St. Anthony bade the fishes depart with the blessing of God, and all went thence with marvellous signs of joy, and likewise the people also."

A writer that we both agree that we could read here is Pierre Loti, and I only wish that I had brought some of his books with me; they would,

I feel, fit into our thought, as old words will at times to a new tune. I shall never forget reading "Les Pêcheurs d'Islands" many years ago, when I was staying at St. Ives, in Cornwall. I used to take it out with me to the sands, at the fishing end of the town, where all the boats were pulled up, and read, a little at the time, and talk to the men who were, as it seemed, playing at work, in the true leisurely Cornish fashion, with nets and boats; and watch the glistening, changing light over the bay, and the tide creeping up across the sands, and the grey church-tower and the grey old town; atmosphere and sea and sand all alike lavender-tinted, save for the highlypainted boats, and many-coloured garments hung to dry, fluttering all along the quay and sands and out from every window. The fishermen were English and not French, but still there was as little difference between them and the fisherman of the Islands, who lounged and smoked just in the same leisurely fashion, as there would be, I feel, between the life drawn in "Le Matelot" and the life here. Narrow, crooked streets and many steps, grey homes, huddled one against another, the russet sails spread out to dry-I seem to see it all, and yet closer beneath my eyes those magic books, holding between their flimsy yellow

paper covers such pictures of the sea and its moods, such a breath of pungent, clear air, such a roar of the deep sea and whisper of waves on the shingle, intermingled with the desultory talk of the men and the clink of the women's knittingneedles. These are all books to be read very close to the sea, as one feels that they must have been written.

CHAPTER XI

- "Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt down,
 "Twas sad as sad could be;
 And we did speak only to break
 The silence of the sea.
- "Day after day, day after day,
 We struck nor breath nor motion,
 As idle as a painted ship
 Upon a painted ocean."

 COLERIDGE.

It has been another blazing hot day, but the sky has lifted, the air is clear enough to breathe, the sun is out, and in spite of the heat we have been feeling vastly contented with ourselves and life in general, and not in the least in sympathy with the Captain's longing for a wind "to push her on a bit." There must, however, be a little air somewhere, though against us, for this morning a big four-masted ship came lolloping slowly over the western horizon, and then hung up in the calm, about a mile to our stern, signalling herself as homeward bound from Brazil.

The excitement on board our ship was intense.

Though for over a month we had been traversing a part of the Atlantic which is in truth a thick maze of steamship routes, not a sail, not a funnel had we seen, not one single sign of alien life indeed, beyond that one solitary wild-duck. Then suddenly we were in a whirl—life had never seemed more busy, more crowded, more full of thrilling possibilities in the very heart of London. We were in touch with the world again—anything might happen—and we did up our hair, realizing that the people on the other ship could certainly see up as plainly with their telescopes as we could see them with ours: probably more so, for I do not suppose for a moment that their hands shook with sheer excitement. "Who knows," said Charlotte, in an almost awed whisper; "there might be someone we know on board her." I did not jeer at my friend because of the note of hope in her voice, nor did I remark to her that our one idea had been to escape from people we knew, or that it was scarcely likely, as we had no acquaintances in Brazil, that any could be returning from thence in a sailing-ship, though my forbearance arose merely from the very simple fact that I felt exactly as she did about it, all stirred up by expectancy and that strange gregarious instinct which never quite dies out of us;

so that meeting in some strange place people we have once known, or who have known people that we have known, or lived in places where we have lived, we are at once all interest and good-fellowship, without the least pause to remember how boresome such meetings have before proved, when the first gush is over.

After some conversation with flags the Captain inquired if the strange vessel would take letters home for us, and on her answering in the affirmative we all rushed off to get our writing materials, and busied ourselves with brief letters, as there was no knowing when a wind might spring up and our mail-ship depart. While we wrote the lifeboat was launched, with six men and boys at the oars and the mate at the stern to steer. Charlotte and I implored to be allowed to go, but the Captain would not hear of it, for the sky had a curious brassy look, and he was afraid that a wind might spring up before we could get back; and, after all, it must have been frightfully hot in that small boat on the open sea, for even under the awning it was really intense during the midday. So we consoled ourselves with claret-and-soda on the poop-deck, feeling such an event as this interview with a strange ship was a sort of party and worthy of celebration; while for the men who

were out grilling in the boat on the open sea we prepared bottles of beer wrapped in wet towels, and set in the draught of the alley-way from the saloon to cool.

A queer old Dutchman, who looks as if he had been cut out of a piece of particularly coarsegrained and knotty wood, and who is known by everybody as "Kruger," was at the wheel the greater part of the afternoon, watching our revels with a thirsty eye. I took him the largest possible tumbler of shandy-gaff and came to the conclusion that his neck must have been all throat, for he did not seem to swallow at all, but emptied the whole of it with one tip into his capacious mouth, like emptying a bucket, without moving a muscle of his rugged old face. Only as he handed back the tumbler to me did he give one deep sigh of satisfaction, while his eyes closed for a moment with an expression of the most complete ecstasy.

Of course, when the boat came back, such a slow-moving spot on that great waste of blue, and had been hauled up and made fast in the chocks again, we deluged the poor mate, as he sat drinking his beer, with a perfect flood of questions. At last, as our breath somewhat gave way, and we realized that we had been doing all the talking,

the Captain asked him if he had told the skipper that there were ladies on board his boat.

"I did that," answered the sturdy Scot, fixing his blue eyes with an air of the deepest melancholy on his empty mug, and pushing his cap farther back on his damp forehead, as though in hopes that it had obscured his vision in some way.

"I suppose he said he reckoned you had to mind your p's and q's now?" laughed the Captain.

"He said that it must be a fine nuisance," responded the mate bluntly, still occupied with his empty mug:

"And what did you answer?" I interposed, thinking that here was the chance of a compliment even from a Scotchman. I might have known better, for the only reply I got from him, as he turned his mug upside down with a plaintive air of finality, was:

"Aye, I told him that it was just gey awkard."

Afterwards I took the gallant sailor to task for this speech, but he stuck to his guns like a man.

"Well, it is just terrible awk'ard," he persisted. "I was fair mad when I heard there were lady passengers coming, not but what I'm getting

to like you well enough myself now;" which was the nearest approach to a compliment I have ever got from him.

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There was a perfect downpour of tropical rain last night, and all the buckets on the poop being full of soft water, we took advantage of the occasion to have a great washing-day, a thing which is impossible on ordinary occasions, as the water has to be dealt out with a careful hand, and we are put on an allowance of so much each per day. It must have been an amusing sight, the Captain, the mate, three men passengers and myself all with bare feet, and with sleeves rolled elbow high, washing pocket-handkerchiefs as if for dear life, though with decidedly more zeal than skill. sat cross-legged on a little footstool on deck in front of my bucket; but the men—to whom, with the immunity of their kind, backache seemed a thing unknown—stood over theirs and scrubbed and rubbed, and soaped and wrung, till it really seemed as if there would be nothing left to dry by the time they had finished. It was the gayest scene—the men in white clothes, the mate with the added attraction of a blue shirt, and Charlotte with a scarlet blouse, and dark skirt turned up over her white petticoat—rather with

a conscious eye to effect, I suspect; while the poop was crossed and re-crossed with strings all a-flutter with white and coloured handkerchiefs, the Captain showing us a cunning trick of half untwisting little pieces of the string at intervals all along it, inserting a corner of the handkerchief and letting it twist up again, so that no pegs or pins were needed.

It is the pleasantest, homeliest, most wholesome life I have ever known. From where I was sitting I could look down the whole length of the ship and see the sails swinging lazily against the intensely blue sky, with all of the Glasgow soot quite washed out of them. Some of the men were painting the ports with a vivid first coat of scarlet paint, while a couple more were busy graining the break of the poop with yellow ochre, supposed to represent oak. A couple of sheep and numerous cocks and hens paraded the main-deck, keeping up a constant farmyard chatter, and up in the rigging some apprentices were overhauling foot-ropes and singing at their work. The fo'c'sle-head, like the poop, was hung with washing, mostly blue of every shade, while the shadows of the sails on the deck were of the purest indigo. Some of the men, busied over what I could not see, were singing a famous old chanty; a boyish voice, belonging, l

think, to a young Highlander, taking the solo, with a chorus of deeper tones:

Solo: "Oh, Shenadoah, I love your daughter!"
Chorus: "Away, my rolling river!"
Solo: "Oh, Shenadoah, I long to hear you!"
Chorus: "Ah! ah! we're bound away
"Cross the wide Missouri!"

Solo: "The ship sails free, a gale is blowing."
Chorus: "Away, my rolling river!"
Solo: "The brace's taut, the sheet's a-flowing."
Chorus: "Ah! ah! we're bound away
"Cross the wide Missouri!"

Solo: "Oh, Shenadoah, I'll ne'er forget you!"
Chorus: "Away, my rolling river!"
Solo: "Till I die, I'll love you ever."
Chorus: "Ah! ah! we're bound away
'Cross the wide Missouri!"

The tune seemed to swing out to the lazy roll of the vessel, as soothing to us children of larger growth as the swing of the cradle and the goodnight lullaby is to an infant. The whole of our little world seemed so compact, so free from the wearisome petty troubles that come from crowds, so full of light and colour, that I felt I could hardly sufficiently gather up every crumb of it, as an antidote against the future, and all it may yet bring.

On our starboard a white-sailed, five-masted ship, on the easterly tack, was hovering like a butterfly just across the horizon, that first ship we saw

yesterday morning seeming to have broken our spell of solitude. We neither of us ever saw so large a sailing-ship before, and only wished that she would come a little nearer. America, the Captain tells us, is turning out many such ships now, disproving altogether our old notion, that wind-jammers were becoming obsolete. These monsters, some even six-masted, are schooner-rigged fore and aft, and have an immense carrying capacity. Could any flying be better than being in such a vessel, with all her sails full set, scudding along before the Trades—that's the way I, for one, would like to go to heaven.

"Oh, I love old Ocean's smile,
I love old Ocean's frowning;
I love old Ocean all the while—
My prayer's for death by drowning."

Cannot one imagine sailing in some such vessel to those harbours of immortal peace of which the old Scandinavian Sagas sing, where winter never comes, and where the sheep, with their lambs beside them, browse ever in grassy meadows, embowered among deep-bosomed hills?

The sky that had lifted for a while and put us in such a good humour with its smiles, in spite of the heat, has gathered into a thick blanket of dense grey; still we are moving a little, a very little, and

the Captain thinks that in another couple of days we shall be clear of the Doldrums and the jagged edge of the cloud-ring which makes them so oppressive, and may hope for some elasticity, some breathing space away from this dense wall of air, where one has much the same feeling as among a close-packed crowd. The atmosphere seems so horribly tangible; it is like hot human bodies pressing upon one, and for the first time I understand Job's words: "He looketh to the ends or the earth, and seeth under the whole heaven, to make the weight for the winds, and He weigheth the waters by measure." I am sure the air here might be weighed against the water and found in no wit wanting.

Some writer has likened this oppressive atmosphere, under which we are all groaning, to an immense atmospherical heart, the ring itself and the belt of clouds which it overshadows taking the part both of the auricle and ventricle. The great heart throbs and throbs, up and down, up and down, never still, gathering up and condensing huge quantities of vapour, and devouring the Trade Winds, that rush in upon it from north to south laden with warm air, which must push its way upwards, clear of the cloud, before it can even begin to cool by radiation, while the vapours it has

brought in its train condense on the lower surface, while the sun plays down on the upper surface of the throbbing mass, till it and the air around it are alike gorged, and the surplus hot moisture discharged from the heart over the whole body of the earth. It is, indeed, as if in this cloud-ring dynamical strength was gathered, and sufficient impulse given to the air to ensure its circulation. One may imagine how in all this coming and going, this rush of hot vapours upwards through the cloud, this condensation, this blazing sun overhead, and these gorged vapours which seek for release, the cloud itself becomes the scene of turgid agitation; so that when an electrical discharge takes place, the thunder echoes on from cloudridge to cloud-ridge, from valley to valley, while the scarcely condensed vapour falls in this unceasing drizzle, moving ever with the steady persistent beat, north and south, south and north, of this great heart of our world—the merest undulation as one measures the distance on the earth's surface.

As a natural phenomenon I am exceedingly interested in this strange region, but as an acquaintance I am beginning to weary of it, and think that I could have arranged it all in some less intricate, and yet just as effective a fashion, without all the attendant disagreeables. The barometer, they say,

129

stands lower under this cloud-ring than anywhere else, and to-day mine has fallen proportionately, for the heat is beginning to try Charlotte terribly. She says if only she could take one deep breath of clear air, deep enough to fill her lungs, she would be all right, but that she feels like a fish out of water; and I really believe that we need gills in a place like this, and not lungs at all, for the air has a density which they seem quite incapable of grappling with or struggling against—in truth, we have ceased to struggle, and thence our misery, for if all our restless flappings did nothing else, they certainly stirred the air around us and diverted our thoughts a little.

CHAPTER XII

"Man that is born of woman

Has very little time to live:

He comes up like a fore-topmast staysail

And down like a small flying jib."

Old Song.

The Captain was telling me a strange story this morning as we sat together on the skylight, he with his beloved pipe between his lips, and on his knees his inseparable companion, the cat, whose coat he meditatively stroked the wrong way all the time he was speaking, a thing "Boy" would by no manner of means submit to from anyone else. The conversation had drifted round in a desultory sort of way to the subject of the supernatural, and a Scotchman's special prerogative, second sight, which the Captain said reminded him of a strange case which had come under his own notice.

"It was when I was an apprentice," he began meditatively, taking a long pull at his pipe; "and happened one night in the second mate's watch, when it was blowing enough to split every bit of canvas on the ship to ribbons—indeed, it did rip up

the main-sail like a bit of paper that very night. Well, close on eight bells the man on the lookout, a great big Highlander, over six feet high, sang out that there was a light right ahead. Of course, the mate went straight up to the foc's'le and peered out, but not a sign of a light was there; and then, equally of course, he rounded on the man for singing out like that when there was nothing to be However, the fellow stood so persistently to his word that the mate lingered on till the First came on watch, when he called him up to have a look too, but he swore there was nothing there, though by this time the Highlander was pretty near frantic, declaring that the light was crossing backward and forward across the bows, and that it foreboded some ill-luck to the ship or death to someone on it; and so impressed was the man that he could hardly be persuaded to go off to his watch below, though that's a thing they are generally nippy enough about doing.

"It was a queer night, I remember, with heavy dark clouds like a wall on the weather side, and zigzag streams of lightning shooting up out of the horizon, while the wind boomed in heavy gusty roars as if a hurricane were upon us, a dirty enough night without any Highland spooks to make it worse.

"Next morning, however, it had cleared up completely, and I was sitting up in the sun smoking my pipe in front of the apprentice's door, which was well in the middle of the main-deck, while a lot of the men were lolling about round me smoking and drinking their coffee, when out blunders a Dutch fellow we had on board, as hardened an old case as ever you set eyes on, with his face the colour of a bit of paper, and all grown loose and flabby as a fleshy fellow's will if he's in a fright.

"There he stood right in front of us, with the mazed sort of look that people has when they come suddenly out of the darkness into a bright light, his mouth dropped open as if he was going to say something, though never a word came, till one of the fellows sang out to ask him what in the world was he standing there staring at us all like that for. Then he spoke, in a voice which seemed to be in some sort of way strangled out of him.

"'Mein Gott!' he said, 'I've had such a dream' and then he gave a sort of sharp cry as if the words were fair choked out of him—'I dreamt I saw a funeral—here, o' board this very ship, mates——'

"'Well,' put in one of the fellows, with a laugh, rising to his feet and spitting out his quid, as eight bells sounded, and it was his turn to go on watch, 'I reckon there's nothing so mighty terrible in

that. They say on shore, I mind, that to dream of a funeral means a wedding, so look out for yourself when we get on shore, my lad.'

"But the Dutchman took no notice of their chaff—only his face twitched a little, and I saw his hand opening and shutting nervously.

"'It was a real funeral,' he persisted doggedly, 'and the main-topsail laid to the mast and all; while a corpse was out on the main hatch, with the ensign over him, but he weren't sewn up in anything, an' a puff of wind just caught the corner of it as I wur lookin' and twitched it clean off.'

"'Oh, stow that!' put in the same man again, a great rough fellow, with no more nerves than a bull. 'We've heard just about enough of your funerals, and your bally corpses; I suppose you'll be telling us next who the stiff un was.'

"'Yes,' answered the man, half sullenly, and his face looked livid in the growing sunlight—'I saw 'im plain enough, an' it wur'—here he hesitated, with a great shudder that seemed to shake him from head to foot, and jerked out the next word almost with a shout—'saw 'im, mein Gott, I saw 'im plain enough, mates, and it wau me—me, lads, that there corpse a-lyin' out on this main hatch.'

"And here the fellow began to laugh, like a man who laughs to keep himself from going raving mad

with fear—a horrible enough laugh, too; but there was no more to be heard then, for at that moment the mate sung out for someone to go up and bend the main-sail, and off went the Dutchman, up aloft like a cat—as if all he wanted was to get away from himself and his own thoughts just as quickly as he could.

"Well, the fellow was always a daring devil for a Dutchman, and never seemed to pay much attention to what he was about, going at it as if nothing mattered a hang to him, having, in fact, got such a reputation that none of the elder men cared to go up aloft with him if they could well get out of it. And that day he just seemed as if he didn't care for anything except driving that dream out of his head by some sort of work, but just went slap-dash at what was to be done; and getting on to the main-yard with his robands in his hand, took five of them and rove them through the eyelet in the head of the sail and round the jack-stay, and then, with his knees on the yard, got hold of them in both hands and began pullingthrowing his whole weight into them so suddenly that the sharp friction broke them, and he came down with a sickening thud on to the main-deck, almost at my feet.

"The suddenness of it all, for there didn't seem

a moment between seeing him running up the rigging and lying there horribly flat and still, stunned me so that I was just too sick and dazed with horror to even sing out, till the mate came and bent over him, then called to me to help and try and lift him. But there was little enough for us or anyone else to do for the poor fellow, for he was just smashed all down one side, as completely as if it had been done with a mallet—shoulder, arm, thigh, and legs—and all he could do was just to beg and pray us, for God's sake, to throw him overboard and put him out of his misery, for he was done for. Well, we could see that plain enough, and knew that the kindest thing would be not to bother him or move him about more than could possibly be helped; so a couple of men just lifted him and laid him on the main hatch, out of the wet-for we were shipping a good bit of sea at the time—and covered him up with a blanket to keep the sun off him. Poor fellow! I couldn't help thinking when I saw his face staring up over the edge of that blanket how horribly true his dream had come; and he thought of it too, I could tell that plain enough, for his face was twitching with something more than pain; while the big Highlander, who had seen the light the night before, stood and looked down at him, the

two of them never saying a word, but just looking straight into each other's eyes for some moments, as if there was some queer bond of knowledge between them, different as they were in everything else.

"'The light,' said the Scotchman at last, half under his breath; 'I knew it meant someone, but I dinna rightly ken who.'

"He spoke so low that I hardly thought the other man could have heard him, but he did, for he just gave a little nod with his head and caught his breath with a sort of sob of pain or fear—I don't know which; and he died before twelve o'clock, so that we buried him that night. It was a mighty queer thing, anyhow, with the dream and all."

"The light and then the dream—it was strange. One wonders what they had to do with each other. Were the men particular friends?"

"Not that I know of, and I've often wondered what it all meant, but there's few things in this world that don't mean something. And another odd thing about it all was that the poor fellow had been on the ship two or three voyages, and got the best bunk of any in the men's quarters. Well, one after another tried sleeping in it after he had gone, but they never tried it twice. They said that, good as the bunk was, there wasn't room for

two in it, and until that Dutchman settled down in his new quarters he seemed sort of ways to expect that bunk to be kept for him. Anyhow, he wouldn't let anyone else rest in it, but turned in every night, no matter who was there—at least, something, something horrible, bringing a breath of cold salt air with it, wet and shivering, seemed always beside them.

"I remember another odd case of the same sort of thing happening to myself," went on the Captain, after a pause, carefully refilling his pipe for the sequel. "The whole of one night, during my watch on deck, I felt just awfully scared and nervous, in a sort of way that I had never felt before, and for no reason whatever, as far as I could see. I had a sort of idea, though, that one did not feel that way for nothing, and I thought to myself, I'll be pretty careful if I have to go up aloft to-night.

"Well, as it happened, I didn't have to, and one bell was just sounding, while I, rather hauling myself over the coals for giving way to silly fancies, was standing on the poop-deck by the mate's side, when down came the spanker gaff, struck the spanker boom, and, shooting off it like a spear, just grazed the mate's shoulder and cut down at an acute angle right through the deck

clean into the saloon; while the vangs crashed down upon the wheel just beside me, doing no more than giving me a bruised shoulder, and not even touching the man who was steering. I'm not a superstitious man, but I must say that I don't like those uncanny sort of feelings; they never come for nothing, and they fair torment me out of my senses sometimes, wondering what they have come for."

CHAPTER XIII

"And when the heat broke up, and in its place
Came the strong shouting days and nights, that run,
All white with stars, across the labouring ways
Of billows warm with storms, instead of sun."
PHILIP BOURKE MASTON.

To-DAY we crossed the Line in the good oldfashioned way, Mr. and Mrs. Neptune and the policeman and doctor and barber all in attendance, Mrs. Neptune being impersonated by one of the apprentices, well stuffed out with cushions, and attired in such fragments of feminine raiment as we had been able to spare. We all went up on to the bridge to see the sport, and the cook's second boy-not the veritable Jimmy Ducks, but a miserable little stowaway, who had crept into sight the day after we left the mouth of the Clyde—and two of the men passengers were lathered with some terrible-looking mixture and dosed and dipped in due form-great fun for the onlookers, though the joke came a little too near home when the Captain sang out that it was my

turn. There was a perfect chorus of delighted "Ayes" from the men, which completely drowned my repeated assertions that I had crossed the Line many times before, and the two policemen—represented by a little French Canadian I had enjoyed many a pleasant chat with, and a rollicking young apprentice—came tumbling upon the bridge and seized me. However, after some struggling, I got the better of my captors by the simple expedient of crossing my feet and suddenly sinking down, like a Jap, upon the deck. I think for one terrified moment they imagined they had smashed me up like a curious and fragile mechanical toy, for they stood perfectly silent, the picture of horrified amazement, and gazed at me in the blankest dismay, till someone on the deck grasped the meaning of my strategy, and there was a general roar of laughter.

The wind is freshening a little, the air is lighter, and the sun is breaking through the clouds once more. I watch Charlotte as a gardener would watch a delicate plant after a too long drought, hoping every moment to see her revive, for the very sight of the filling sails and the sound of the little whispering breeze among the rigging is invigorating; but so far its only effect is to make her seem chilly and altogether out of sorts. Still,

the heat of the last few days was enough to bowl anyone over, and there was sure to be some sort of reaction after it, so I absolutely decline to feel nervous.

There is a wild, unsteady wind blowing to-day, with constant sweeping scuds of rain. The sky is grey, not sullen and downcast, as it has been, but an inspiring mass of heaped grey clouds of every tint, piled up as if the wind had, in sheer lightness of heart, been romping with them, tossing them up as a haymaker would do with great piles of sweet-scented hay. What a divine colour grey can be—the grey of clouds like these, the silken lining of the willow leaves when the wind sets them all a-flutter, the soft velvety grey of the great poppy leaves, the grey of distant pines, the smoke from cottage chimneys, the tint of a woodpigeon's breast!

The sea as well as the sky was clad in Quaker-like tints to-day, though in no Quaker mood. Only the crests of the waves were white, and just beneath their apex there was a flash of the clear translucent blue of a hedge-sparrow's eggs; while they seemed to surge in every direction at once, for there was a heavy swell coming up against the wind. Some of the waves appeared as if impelled to a sort of fury by the opposition the ship

offered to them, and lifted their heads high above their fellows, swooping down upon us in a really vindictive fashion, the form of their curves as they rose being truly wonderful, and making one realize how much more potent and satisfying is the beauty of form than of colour. There was, in addition, something intensely alive and serpentine about them as they lifted their foamcrowned heads above the taffrail, poised motionless for one thrilling moment, and then struck with a force and passion that it was impossible not to associate with life. One cannot wonder, as one watches such waves, that the ancients believed the sea itself to be some fierce, untamable monster, whose moods might, by some happy chance, be circumvented, but whose will could never be compelled.

I think my nearest and dearest would scarcely have known me if we had met to-day, and my enemies would have delighted in remarking how completely my appearance depended on my dress. Truly, I must have presented a queer enough spectacle in my borrowed garments, being what the old salts term "parish rigged"—that is, completely clothed by contribution. One of the boys had lent me a pair of long-boots, as they are still all going barefoot, the Captain had contributed

a sou'wester, which was well tied on with string, and the mate a yellow oilskin coat and a pair of socks to draw on over my hands and cuffs, so as to prevent the water washing up my sleeves. Charlotte did not feel equal to facing the wet and lurching decks, and lay on her bunk most of the day reading, so there was fortunately only one such rig-out to be procured.

We were doing nine knots most of the day, going like steam, and lying over to the fresh breeze, close hauled to the wind, with the lee scuppers a wash of water. The Captain hates taking in sail, but during the dog-watch the wind got a bit too much for him. For several hours it had been raining in torrents, while a great black cloud drifted up to windward, higher and higher, till it got right overhead. We lit a bit of fire in the saloon after tea and I established Charlotte, well wrapped up, by it, with the cabin doors open, so there was plenty of air. Then, as I got into my oilskins again, and clambered over the weatherboard across the alley-way, we began to ship big seas in earnest, and it was all I could do to get up the companion on to the poop. The Captain, who was standing at the rail, and seemed to have his eyes everywhere at once, bellowed out to the men to stand by the royal halliards. The ship

was laying well over by that time, the water hissing across her every moment, even up on the poop, while the yards and masts and rigging were all shrieking and moaning together. It was glorious. Every drop of blood in my veins roared and sang. I saw the Captain put his hand to his mouth, and, with an irresistible impulse, tugged violently at his sleeve, and shrieked: "Don't! don't!" One had to shriek and open one's mouth very wide for anyone to hear in the midst of all the din.

- "Don't what?" bellowed the Captain in my ear.
- "Take in the royals!" I shrieked back. "Let her rip!"
 - "And if she gets pooped?"
- "Hang the pooping!" I never felt so mad in my life. I could think of nothing but what a shame it would be to check her now, when she seemed so in her glory, racing the waves. And the royals, I knew, were the first to be taken in, the royals, her crowning glory.

The Captain gave a queer grin, and looked all round the horizon again.

The ship lay over till the men at the lee royal tackle were well up to their knees. I saw them look up expectantly at the Captain, and stamped

with impatience; if I could have reached I think I would have put my hand in front of his mouth, for every second I expected to hear the cry of—"Loose your royal halliards!" but it did not come; instead, the wind dropped, the squall passed, and the royals remained triumphant.

"Well, you woman," said the "Old Man" during the first calm, "what have you got to say for yourself, interfering with the Captain of a ship while he was on duty?"

"They weren't split," I said weakly.

"No, they weren't split, but no thanks to you. Now get along down with you, or you'll be having a sore throat too." There, the murder is out! It is true Charlotte has a sore throat. But it is nothing, it is only relaxed, or she has got a little cold; and really she has twice the strength to withstand anything that she had when first we came on board.

The waves are still high, but the wind has steadied, and we are running smoothly before it every scrap of canvas set.

CHAPTER XIV

"A child of our grandmother Eve, a female; or, for thy more sweet understanding, a woman."—Love's Labour's Lost.

For four terrible days and nights Charlotte has been ill with the most terrifying throat. the ship has been going on, but I know nothingnothing but that awful gripping fear that she might choke; that terrible feeling of utter helplessness that comes when there is no doctor to appeal to, to tell one what a thing really is, to rob it at least of some of the horrors of the unknown by giving The Captain has a huge well-stocked it a name. medicine-chest, and medical books, over which we have both distractedly poured, and read everything there was to be read about throats, ending by feeling clear about two remedies only, port wine-of which he luckily has a medical supply—and hot Mercifully the hens have linseed poultices. begun laying, or the boys have stopped stealing, so that I have been able to give her an occasional egg and port flip, though for a couple of days she

could only take the merest sip at a time. linseed poultices, for two nights the Captain never went to bed, but kept me supplied with them every hour, piping hot between two plates, so that by the end of the second night the passage of the throat seemed to open a little, and she was able to lie down and breathe more freely, to my intense relief, for I seemed to be obsessed by the sight of that crouching, panting figure in the upper bunk, and to be going mad with my own helplessness. "Never again, my lady, never again," I declared, as I clapped on what I fondly hoped would be the last poultice, "do I take you anywhere without a doctor. You shall marry Dr. Dare, if I have to carry you to the altar; if I have to find a proxy for him in Adelaide, and then you will have at least one always at hand."

Charlotte actually grinned faintly, and I was encouraged.

"Marry him, my dear, marry him, and then he'll have to pay your bills instead of your paying his."

To-day the little mate packed me off peremptorily to have a sleep on his bunk, while he took the nurse's place, for really I was afraid to leave my patient alone for a single moment. I must have been dog-tired, so I slept like the dead

for four hours, and awoke suddenly with a terrifying fear as to what might have happened meanwhile. The mate met me at the cabin door, and reassured me, declaring, "She's doing fine, the poor wee lassie. I gave her a sup o' tea, and now some egg and wine, and she's a rare sight better."

She did indeed look better, so did the cabin, though it is a humiliating confession to have to make; but really I have never seen anything tidier in all my life, while a piece of bunting had been draped over the doorway, so that the door might be left open without any fear of anyone seeing in. Also, to my amusement, that tearful, tender sort of amusement that one feels when one is greatly touched as well as amused, I noticed that Charlotte's mass of hair, which I had tried in vain to grapple with, standing on a stool at the side of her bunk, and falling off it every time the ship rolled, all damp and tangled as it was with salt air and perspiration, was smoothly and tightly plaited either side of her head, and neatly tied with two pieces of fine string.

"He washed my face in eau-de-Cologne and water," she whispered, dragging me down to her with one weak hand; "and did my hair before tea—and—and actually took the hairs out of the brush." All this during his watch below, when

he ought to have been sleeping. He was on deck now, I knew, and would be for the next four hours. Usually we heard the footsteps of the officer on duty and the men at their work, backwards and forwards continually above our heads. But since Charlotte had been ill there had not been a sound, and if they come on our side at all, they must come barefooted. It is strange that sailors, who habitually see so little of women, and would be expected to know nothing of their requirements and ways, make the kindest and most considerate nurses in the world, and are more gentle and handy and thoughtful than most women themselves. The day of my great wash, the mate collected all our handkerchiefs, some four dozen, saying he would iron them for me; and to-day I found them all beautifully flat and folded in a little pile outside my cabin door; though when I asked for the loan of his iron, he confessed he had none, but had damped and folded the hankeys, and pressed them in magazines beneath his mattress.

All the men have been so good to us, better than any words can ever express, excepting the steward, who seems half imbecile from a life of chronic inebriation, and is of no use to anyone. Now that my patient is a little better, there is a constant rapping on the panelling of the door, with

inquiries as to how she is, and offers of food and help; while the mate and Captain take it quite as a matter of course that they should bring Charlotte her meals, and generally help spoil her.

"And yet you thought it such a nuisance having women on board," she said reproachfully one day to the little mate, who was feeding her. She had no appetite, but she could never resist his pleading blue eyes and the persuasive "Now, lassie," as he waited with the spoon poised in his hand for her to open her mouth. "You thought we'd be a nuisance. Well, I've been the most awful nuisance that anyone could be, and yet you are so good to me."

"I'm gettin' sort o' used to you," answered the mate tranquilly.

"And you like us better than you thought you would." Oh, Charlotte, Charlotte, the coquetry of you simple women who always want to be liked!

"I like you fine, when yer a good lassie and take yer broth. For you mind me o' my gran'mither when I see yer lying sick in bed like that," responded the mate sturdily.

It was a real compliment, and though Charlotte's mouth twisted into its odd little one-sided smile, she reckoned it as such, for the mate's grandmother was the one perfect woman in his eyes.

"I like fine ter sit and see her knit, with her fingers going like lightning, never stopping, and the kind old face of her, and her wise old eyes. An' the advice she'll give me, an' the ways of the world she knows of; you'd be fair amazed at all she knows, and the love of her, and the patience of her. Come some day soon, and I'll be getting my master's ticket, and be on a coasting-boat up and down the coast, and come back every week or so. And she'll be keeping home for me in her white mutch. My word, but we'll be fine and happy!" I never saw or heard of such devotion in all my life, and the Captain, who has known him since his first year at sea, says that it was always the same, that the old grandmother—who was also mother to the lad—was his whole world.

"I didn't know men ever loved in that way," said Charlotte one day, her eyes following him rather wistfully; "I would like to have a grandson like that." And I could see all the little procession as it passed through her mind, the tiny baby of her very, very own, the growing boy, the youth, the mature man; and then another baby, another boy, another man, all the dearer for his father's sake.

"I never knew men could be like that," she repeated. Poor Charlotte! she is one of those

sort of women that men fall in love with, and they always see the worst side of them. We who only have men friends really get much the best of it, for the most part; but, then, we can never be anyone's grandmother. Life is an odd affair of compensations; we gain by losing and lose by gaining all along the road.

For several days Charlotte has been on deck again; the awnings are down, and she gets the full benefit of the not too strong sun and the lifegiving south-easterly trades.

Oddly enough, the illness seems to have in some way done her good; she is still terribly weak, but it is not a persistent weakness, rather a weakness of a child that is growing in strength every day; while there is no need to spoon-feed her any longer, for she is perpetually hungry. It seems as though she had got so low that she was perforce obliged to start life all afresh; while the improvement is steady and persistent, to the great joy of her nurses, who notice she no longer flames up into strength and high spirits, to relapse again into weakness and depression. I am so glad, so relieved, that I could I actually found myself singing over my bath this morning, "Hurrah! the foe is moving," in a sort of Gregorian chant. The bath is a primitive affair, the only way of filling it being by

means of a trap-door in the deck above and sailors with buckets, while it leaks so that by the time it is filled it is empty again. This sounds Irish, I know, but the fact is that the men calculate so many buckets to fill it, and do not in the least realize that it all runs out as soon as it is put in. now I have bribed one of the apprentices to bring me two big buckets of salt water each morning, and leave them standing in the bath, so that I can get a really refreshing splash—though I am always horribly afraid of someone suddenly opening the trap-door overhead. For Charlotte, who cannot rough it in this fashion, I generally manage to beguile a fair supply of fresh warm water from the cook, and have permanently annexed a tin washtub, and—" Put less in the soup" is my advice to the "Doctor" when he remonstrates with me on my wasteful use of good water. But really nobody grudges Charlotte anything-at least, no man who is not blind and deaf and soulless.

CHAPTER XV

"Why are there men and women that while they are nigh me the sunlight expands my blood? Why, when they leave me, do my pennants of joy sink flat and lank?"

WALT WHITMAN.

It is odd how some people impress you at once with their intense individuality; you remember all they have said, their every shade of expression, even what they have worn on the occasions, perhaps the fewest, on which you have met. is clear-cut and memorable. Other people, on the contrary, seem like weak pencil sketches; there is nothing definite about them, nothing one can recollect; in the worst cases you may be introduced again and again, and only remember them with a start when you hear their name, while visualizing them any way when they are not present is completely out of the question. the Captain and first mate, the cook, the sail-maker, the Swede, Ingorson, the old Dutchman, Kruger and two of the boys, are quite distinct. I have

only to think of them and there they are before me, appearance, gesture, and speech. The Captain, slim and intensely alert; bright eyes, crisp decisive voice, the very atmosphere he seems to carry with him all complete. The mate, square, slow, dogged. The rough-hewn old Dutchman, with thick, heavy skin, folded and lined like a rhinoceros, of immense strength, and immense dogged courage. Swede, an old whaler, with wild, bright eyes, and high voice, and great hands, and huge stride. And then the boys, the dark-eyed, vivid Celt, the reserved Saxon—both full of force and individuality, alike only in their intense vitality, the quiet strength of the one and the wiry energy of the The sail-maker, twisted and distorted, with small melancholy eyes, like a monkey's, under pent brows: full of strange stories, and odd meandering trains of thought, bred, doubtless, over the sewing of many a long, long seam. the "Doctor," the typical Irishman: cunning, yet simple, shrewd and ignorant, and full of every sort of prejudice and superstition. But this is all; the young Scotch lawyer seemed at first as if he might be clever, but in truth is only shallow, rattling along over a few pebbles of Socialism, modern literature and unbelief, with a great deal of noise and stir, but not lingering long enough

anywhere to deepen. The Lancashire lad, I believe, might prove to have a fine character if he would only give it play, and not devote himself entirely, as he does, to his huge volume of Gibbon's "Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire," without which he has never been yet seen. It is really rather pathetic, the one great book, the one great nation, and life passing all the time, and the world so terribly full of things to be seen and learnt, and his own life really so much more interesting, if he only knew it, than the history of any dead nation, however great.

Yet suppose I do count him in as one of the individuals, that is but nine, out of all this shipboard. I remark on this to Charlotte, and she says: "No, for you have forgotten the cat."

But I had done nothing of the sort really; it was only that the cat stands alone, distinct—out-individualizing every individual. "Let us agree with the world in general that a cat has nine lives," pursued Charlotte; "and that this cat has nine different individualities to its nine different lives—that makes fourteen people on board this ship that really count, the cat being half."

When Charlotte talks in that way she reminds me of Plato—of course, she is not so deep, but she is just as mystifying and convincing. "For

instance, when a man, by feeling, hearing, or perceiving a thing by any of the senses, knows what it is that thus strikes the senses, and at the same time imagines to himself another thing (independent of that knowledge, by virtue of a quite different knowledge), do we not justly say that the man remembers the thing that comes into his Charlotte has heard that cats have nine lives; she feels that there can be no individuality without life; she perceives that the ship's cat has individuality to a striking degree, and (independent of that knowledge, by virtue of a quite different knowledge-namely, a woman's genius for jumping at conclusions) argues that the cat is fully the equal of the nine other individuals on board this ship. The line of argument is distinctly Charlotte, notwithstanding that the sentences between the inverted commas are to be found in the "Phædo."

And yet, after all, even without the wisdom of the ages to support her line of argument, she is right. There are many men—of sorts—on board, but there is only one cat, and such a cat! She is always spoken of as "he," in spite of the fact that on the return voyage last trip she brought in the world a family of kittens, during a most unholy gale off Cape Horn; though the Captain tells me that she treated them with the barest toleration,

"being such an arrant scoundrel, such a hard case, that he is a deal more like a boy than a girl."

But the ship's cat is not only more like a "he" than a "she," it has also more of the characteristics of a dog than any cat I ever met before, the chief of them being its unswerving and undivided devotion to the Captain; and that in spite of being teased and tormented, and, worst of all, laughed at, in a way that would alienate most cats' affections for ever.

We—that is, the cat and the Captain—keep cocks and hens on board, which during the fine weather parade the decks in the most exasperatingly consequential manner. Still, they are popularly supposed to be held within certain bounds, these bounds being the delight of the cat. Let the Lord of the Harem lead his train of wives up on to the poop-deck and he pays dearly for his temerity. "Boy" does not at once take matters into his own hands, but if the Captain is below will deliberately walk down the companion and into his cabin, stare him in the face for a moment, and then make his exit, walking backwards, and with weird emphatic mews entreating him to come and witness the scandal that is disgracing "their" ship. Even then he awaits orders, at the side of his master, up on the poop-deck, the whole of his

muscular little body, with its precise tiger-like markings, tense and rigid, the pupils of his clear green eyes contracted to mere pin-points by the intensity of his feelings as he watches, not the intruders, but the eye of his god. Then suddenly, without a word, some electric current seems to pass between them, his back arches, he crouches a little, ready for a spring, so ready that he is off, like the bolt from a tightly strung catapult, almost before the words "At 'em, Boy!" are out of the Captain's mouth.

For a moment the cock may face him—feathers ruffled, beak agape, wings spread—but it is only for the moment, during which his hysterical female belongings are scattering, Boy's one care being that they shall not go over the rail. Then comes their lord's turn, and he is harried on all sides, the furred fury that attacks him appearing a mere blurred mist of many cats, so swiftly does he circle and leap and dart, scratch and spit. The cock's wings are spread as a protection, no longer in defiance, his erstwhile brilliant and erect comb becomes pale and flaccid, his curving tail feathers, that but a moment before would not have disgraced a Field-Marshal's hat, trail on the deck. With ducking head he runs to and fro, then suddenly throws all pretence of dignity to the

winds, flings out his long ungainly legs and hurtles over the break of the poop after his departing fair, who are fleeing to their own quarters in the midships, with their tails blown over their heads like inverted crinolines.

To see Boy play ball with a piece of cork is a truly wonderful study in curves and intensest vitality. He crouches just about three yards from his master, the pupils of his eyes expanded till they look like black wells, with the merest rim of green, his tail beating the deck with a regular circular movement.

"Ready, Boy!" cries the Captain, and he stiffens himself with a joyous quiver which runs through the whole of the lithe little body, in which every atom of life is gathered for the spring; it is for the time a matter of life and death, and his whole being is aflame with ardour; there is he himself, and the cork, and, incidentally, the man who throws—nothing else, and no one else in the whole of the wide world.

"Now!" The cork is flung and Boy springs, stretched to his full length, then gathered to a ball in mid air, with front paws upraised like a cricketer's hands, full a yard from the deck, catches the cork between his white-stockinged feet, and rolls on the

161

deck, kicking at it in a perfect transport of delight with his hind-feet.

But if he misses? Ah, that is another matter. Supposing we are too well-mannered to laugh, he simply appears oblivious of the bauble having been thrown at all, but walks the deck a little, goes up to it in a leisurely fashion, sniffs as if to say, "What in the world can this be?" looks at his master-"a game, eh?" and finally picking it up, deposits it at his feet, asking, as an obviously new idea, that it shall be thrown. But if anyone, other than his master, has laughed, the game is over for the day, and off goes his Highness in a fit of sulks, which is, in its intensity, another sign of how great a mistake his real sex has been, for women seldom sulk: they usually have too much to say on any matter which annoys them.

At such times as this he delights in getting into the most dangerous positions, on the taffrail, or up on the boats, with the air of one who says to himself: "I'll give them a good fright for once, and they'll be sorry for this levity, then they'll wish they hadn't."

"Come down out of that!" shouts the Captain. But Boy merely cocks an eye at him and does not budge an inch, till his master stoops for a coil of rope, when he is off like a flash to a safer position,

for he knows quite well that he is not allowed in certain places, even though the ship is, so to speak, his own.

When a sheep has been killed the fresh meat is hung just below the boats on the main-deck, and draws Boy like a magnet, though nothing on earth would tempt him to help himself. But if we are all on the poop-deck, including him, of course, for he hates solitude, and the Captain so much as takes his knife out of his pocket, he mews wildly and trembles all over with excitement. There is an example of self-control! He wants it terribly; so terribly that he is almost mad with excitement at the prospect of even the merest morsel. could help himself easily any hour of the day or night; yet he never does so. Now, tell me, is morality a matter of the soul, which is allowed to the inveterate drunkard, the irreclaimable thief, and is yet denied to Boy? In the saloon it is the same: the Captain has only to pick up his cap and the cat is rubbing himself against his legs mewing, " Meat, meat, meat—meat—please, dear."

Yet it is not merely cupboard love, for however warm the saloon fire, however wet the deck, however rainy and stormy the weather, if the Captain is up on deck, there the cat must be also. Sometimes his courage will half fail him, and he

will wait to see if his idol has not merely gone up to take a look at the weather and then return again; but he cannot rest, and after a moment or so of anxious watching he throws comfort to the winds and is off, not to return to the warmth and light till his master returns too. A few nights ago he was caught by a heavy sea and washed backwards and forwards over the deck, hopelessly, helplessly, till he was secured by the mate and brought to the saloon, a dejected wisp of misery, to be washed in fresh water and dried by the fire. But even then he could not rest; his eyes, as he lay on my lap, were for ever on the door, and he was off again before he was one-half dry.

It is not even as though he had an easy time with his idol, for he is always getting his tail and ears pulled, and his little toes pinched, though he but seldom retaliates with claw or tooth, while if he does he is so bitterly ashamed of himself that it is really heart-breaking to see his utter dejection.

When first we came on board, Boy regarded us with the utmost suspicion; perhaps we reminded him of his own sex, or perhaps it was sheer dislike of petticoats fluttering aboard his ship. But since that first night, when Charlotte was so ill, all this has changed. While the Captain made poultices, Boy was constantly in and out, clamber-

ing on to the bunk, and clamouring strenuously for notice and explanations, for puss is feminine enough in this—he will know the why and wherefore of everything. And now, having found that we are tolerated, to say the least of it, by his master, he tolerates us too, and will make himself quite at home on my knee, occasionally even placing two soft little front-paws on my chest, and inviting me amicably to rub noses. But this is only when he cannot sit on his master's knee, which he infinitely prefers, uncomfortable as it always looks, and must be, with no nice warm spread of dress for him to repose on.

CHAPTER XVI

"The night came on a hurricane, the sea was mountains rolling,

Barnes Buntline turned his quid, and said to Billy Bowline, 'A strong sou'wester's blowing, Billy; can't you hear it roar now?

Lord help 'em, how I pities all unhappy folks on shore now.'"

Old Song.

The wind has for several days been petulant and uncertain, blowing first from this direction, then from that, and seeming to gather strength at each change. Three days back there was a choppy swell from the south, with a south by east wind blowing, and lightning flashing from the north. At midday the royals had, alas! to be furled, and then the top-gallants and outer jib. Next day the wind shifted again to east by north, this time in a fair fury, so that the main-sail had to be furled. To-day, till noon, the wind was east-north-east, with sudden squalls and rain. At noon it backed to the north with such sudden force that outer jib and foretop-mast staysail

were split. "Let 'em go!" said the Captain in a sort of joyous rage; "I'll be hanged if I take in more." And almost as he spoke the wind veered again with a slap to the north-west, and a great hole was ripped in the fore lower topsail. As the evening came on, both wind and sea got worse, and two men were put on at the wheel, as the ship was swinging a couple of points on each side of her course.

The worse the weather got, the more cheerful everybody seemed, though now it was blowing with a vengeance, and at last the Captain had to have her hove to under the lower topsails. seas were pouring in a torrent over the weather bulwarks, and men kept getting washed down into the scuppers and crawling out like drowned rats, panting for breath and blinded with water, to the immense amusement of their companions. The poor Doctor got pretty well washed out of his galley, while pots and pans went careering across the deck in every direction. After establishing Charlotte in her bunk with a hot-water bottle and a novel, I staggered on deck and scrambled to my favourite post on the bars of the saloon skylight, while the mate ran a rope round the spanker boom and under my arms, to keep me from being washed overboard, for she was getting pretty

badly pooped. The noise was indescribable; the great waves, with crests a couple of miles long, one after another, came roaring behind us; one caught sight of a great green sea and a whirlwind of foam, which seemed as if it simply must sink The ship would lift to it, and it would race by, beating on the main-deck like a flail, hissing, raging, seething, and setting every port a-clang. The Captain was continually behind the man at the wheel, for in a sea like this everything depends on the steering, and I heard his occasional shout of "Meet her! meet her!" and saw him fling himself forward to aid them — the slightest mistake in a sea like this, if it did not send us all to kingdom come, being enough to shake the men out of the rigging; for they had finished their work on deck, spilled the wind out of the sails by bunt-line, leech, and clew, and were up on the yards making the sail fast.

A little later and they were down on deck again, clinging on to the backstays, above the top-gallant rail, and hanging right out over the swirling water, the waves tearing at them, as with hands, feet, and teeth they hung on and fixed the gear, the roll of the ship sometimes dipping them right over their heads, so that it was a marvel to me how they did not get washed completely away.

At last she was snugged up, under the main lower topsail, and the watch from below turned in wet to the skin, leaving me thankful to think that Charlotte and I had bullied the Captain into sending an order forward for a fire to be lighted in the foc's'le stove, so that the poor wretches might have some chance of drying themselves. The Captain's argument is that the fire makes the men lazy, and very few foc's'les have a stove—which is really no argument at all, for this foc's'le has, and the men have to turn out when they are called, unless they wish for a taste of what the Americans call "belaying-pin soup."

In the Southern hemisphere, where we are now, these cyclonic gales move with the hands of a watch from left to right, and against the hands of a watch in the Northern hemisphere; while near the calm centre of the vortex the storm is most violent, the barometer being extremely low in the very heart of it, and rising as it approaches the periphery. Thom of Mauritius, Piddington of Calcutta, and several others, have declared that the cyclones themselves are sometimes a thousand miles across; but a good many sailors and dwellers in tropical lands, where such storms are well known, believe this measurement to be grossly exaggerated.

Regarding their movements, the most generally acknowledged theory seems to be that their course, westward in the trade regions and eastward in the counter-trades, is caused by the general movement of the atmosphere, much as a stick or straw in a flood may be whirled round and round, yet borne persistently downstream as it revolves, the motion polarwards in each case being caused, as it is believed, by the fact that the edge of the storm nearest to the rapidly revolving equator moves with a far greater velocity than the edge nearer the sluggish poles. All this sounds dry enough stuff, and yet it is quite inseparable from life on a sailing-ship, for by such laws the Captain knows how to shift the yards during the calm at the centre of the cyclone and prepare for its next onslaught, so that in some ways these storms are less dangerous than the unexpected fury of a white squall.

The change of the wind is easy enough to understand when one realizes that the air rushes in at once to fill any space when the atmospheric pressure is low. Suppose, then, that you are standing facing south, and this region of low pressure lies to your right, the wind is necessarily rushing past you from the east to the west to fill it; but the point of atmospheric depression is not

stationary: it is drifting, say east. When it is directly over your head there is a calm, but when it reaches your left hand, then the rush of wind towards it passes from the west to the east to fill If the centre does not pass anywhere near you, or goes in the opposite direction, of course there is no change in the wind at all, and you have merely brushed the skirts of the storm. the wind is swiftly changing, owing to the shifting of atmospheric pressure, and not by any means blowing a hurricane, its movements are still controlled by certain laws or obligations forced on it by the combined movements of the revolving earth, and the force with which the cold air rushes in to replace the warm, so that ordinarily, under non-cyclonic conditions, the wind in the Northern hemisphere most commonly changes from north through east and south to west, and in the south from north through west and south to east.

When we are becalmed, with flapping useless sails, it means that the wind is a sluggard, crawling perhaps some three or four miles an hour, filling up the comparatively empty spaces in so leisurely a fashion that it does not exert strength enough to fill our sails for us. If it increases as much as fourteen miles an hour it may be just recognized as a breeze, or "a fresh," as the sailors

say. At twenty miles an hour it begins to be of some real use—our sails are filled, and "the calm is over." At forty miles it becomes boisterous, elbowing its way impetuously onward. At sixty miles it is a storm, at eighty a "tempesta," such as one could buy from a witch for a gold piece in the good old days; while from ninety onward it is a hurricane, before the fury of which little can endure. Years ago, when I lived in the island of Mauritius, constantly devastated by such hurricanes, as soon as the wind approached to sixty miles an hour telegrams were sent up from the observatory to all the little stations and postoffices, when a red flag was run up on a high pole, indicating that a hurricane was imminent, and that it behoved all who valued their lives to keep indoors with their wooden shutters closed and barred.

Somehow, perhaps it may be only use, but I seem to be able to read the signs of a coming hurricane easier on land than at sea. The way the birds all flock as far as possible inland, and stow themselves away, shivering, under every available eave or window-ledge, even before the wind has begun to stir; the shuddering whirl of the leaves and twigs on the trees, which do not seem to attempt to bow before the storm, but

tremble in all their being at the first distant note of the coming tempest—which sounds as if it had swept the earth bare before it, and was tearing its way through an empty space—all fills one with the strangest sense of foreboding; while the sky looks hot and metallic, with strange livid green tints running through it, as though some terrible corruptive force were at work; and the sun pales to a milky white, hardly brighter than its sister moon.

Then most often there sweeps up from the horizon a thick, hanging mist, followed by a heavy bank of clouds, which is driven before the wind and rent in twain like the veil of the Temple, while its place is again taken by great masses of vapour, which are drawn up from the earth and condensed with such rapidity that immense quantities of electricity are generated. These give birth in their turn to incessant flashes of lightning, which shoot up in long straggling stalks from the horizon, till the passing of the centre opens a clear lakelike space in the heavens, through which the sun and stars seem to shine with a new serenity and brilliance.

At sea this sudden change of wind troubles the water indescribably, beating it up into a huge storm wave, which, with undulation after undula-

tion, sweeps across the ocean for miles, propagating as it passes other waves, which advance at a tangent to the whirwind, till suddenly the wind veers, and the great waves, rolling both from before and behind the sweeping skirt of the storm, encountering one another, rise into a cross sea, which fringes the track of the tempest with a peril that every sailor has reason to fear.

We have not done with our bad weather yet. It seems as if the sea will never "get true" again under the shifting winds, so that "she" has been pretty well rolling the heart out of her. About four o'clock this afternoon three perfectly distinct swells arose, one from the nor'-east, one from the nor'-west, and one from the west-sou'-west, which, meeting in a triangle, with the ship in the centre, lifted themselves pyramid-wise in one terrific wave above her, tearing away the port lifeboatcutting the gunwale and two upper planks down as if they had been sawed off-picking her up. driving her sheer across the skids, turning her upside down, with the neatest precision, on the starboard boat, emptying everything into it, oars, sea-anchors, sails, compasses, etc., as cleanly as a cook might turn out a jelly. Having done this and retreated, the next wave picked up the two of them, and, tearing away the davits, dashed them

down against the taffrail, smashing both boats and taffrail badly, though forcunately not washing the former overboard.

Just as the first wave struck us, the second mate, a big, heavy man, was walking along the deck right under the lee boats, where the sea caught him and swept him out of sight so completely that Charlotte and I, up on the poop-deck, made quite sure that he had gone overboard. Indeed, an eternity seemed to pass before he appeared among the wreckage, washing backwards and forwards like a leaf for some moments until he could struggle to his feet and make a run for the poop. At the same moment a man, who was just leaving the bridge, where he had been making fast the mizzen staysail, was standing with one hand on the rail, when the sea ripped the lifeboat from the stacks, and, sweeping it clean across the bridge, tore the rail out of his hand—curiously enough, without even touching him.

Round the stove fire this evening, in talking over the accident with the boats, the Captain told us of a great storm they had encountered on the last voyage home, just as they were entering the English Channel, and a story in connection with it that I cannot resist repeating, as showing very

plainly the bulldog characteristics of a certain type of sailor.

"I've met with some of the worst storms I have ever known in that English Channel," said The men were coming in, buying the Captain. tobacco, matches, and cold-weather clothing out of the store; and he was up and down every few moments as he spoke. The men's figures appeared little less than Titanic, as we looked up at them from our low chairs, looming above us in their oilskins and sou'westers, in that smoke-thickened atmosphere, indifferently lighted by the faint yellow gleam of one lamp and the red glow of the stove. Charlotte and I were both darning, the usual lot of women when they are largely in the minority. I had started with the socks which the mate had lent me to pull over my hands, and we had gone on to those of the Captain and other two officers all agape with holes, and pretty well heelless from the rub of rubber boots, only too glad to feel that we were really being of some use. the passengers were lolling across the red-clothed table playing chess, while the Lancashire lad, propping his head with one hand, poured over his immortal Gibbon. It was an oddly homely yet primitive scene, and I do not think I shall ever lose the clear mental picture I have of it. The

noise of the wind and waves outside, the nearness of the great hungry sea, and the utter isolation, only making it all appear a more comfortable little world of warmth and light.

"Last voyage home," began the Captain again, sinking into his chair after a lengthened treaty with one of the men over a blue flannel shirt. poking the fire violently as we all do when we wish to unburden ourselves of a story or a confidence—"last voyage home we ran into a holy terror of a sea, just about thirteen miles south by south-east from the Wolf Rock lighthouse. had been up for pretty well the whole of three nights and days, and had just turned in for a bit of a stretch-out in the afternoon, when the mate came running down and reported a wreck on the weather bow. Of course I bolted up on deck and there it was. A dismasted barque, with only a stump of her foremast left standing, flying signals of distress.

"Well, I ran up as near as I dared, and laid the main topsel to the mast. We'd lost the lifeboat going round the Horn, so I got out the gig. There was such a chopping sea on—the one we had to-day was nothing to it—that we couldn't launch the boat properly, and had to take and carry her across the deck and let her down on the lee

177

side, with the lee davit tackle. Then came the pull, for I simply couldn't for the life of me get a crew to go in her; little wonder, too, for she'd had a hole knocked in her bottom only a few days before, and only roughly plastered up with putty, while the gunwale and two upper planks were smashed, and the sea a fair terror. However, the mate came running up in his oilskins swearing he'd go by himself if they'd none of them risk it, on which two plucky little apprentices, that were out of their time last voyage, piped up that they'd go with him.

"Macgregor's a fine hand at quoting Scripture for his own ends, you know, and he bellowed out something about "babes and sucklings," and shouted to the boys to come along and show the bally great lumps of soldier-lads that there was someone that wasn't afraid of a bit of a sea; and told 'em to go and get measured for their red coats, and get their hair cut, and take their shilling, and such like, till for sheer shame—for you can't rat a sailor worse than by telling him he's like a soldier—two men volunteered to go, and they all tumbled into the boat.

"Well, it was a sea, and no mistake! The waves were as steep as the side of a house, and as deep as hell. Again and again I made sure the boat

was gone, but by hook or crook she got up alongside the wreck somehow—no easy job, either, for it looked as if the sea would pitch her over it every moment; and even when they did get round on the leeside there she was bucketing water over her decks enough to swamp 'em.

"I had my glass on them, and I saw Macgregor climb on to the deck somehow, and that there was not a soul there to meet him. I'd been watching the boat so carefully I had lost sight of the wreck for a spell, and—— 'Good God!' thought I, 'the whole bally lot of 'em have been clean washed away while our fellows were going to them.' But the mate told me afterwards that an old black cook had peered out of the kitchen, and jerked his thumb in the direction of the saloon, and then slammed the door behind him.

"Macgregor splashed along the deck, tripping over loose stays and stumbling over broken tackle and spars at every step, cursing pretty free, as you may guess, at the blank incivility of those fellows, not so much as coming to meet him after all the trouble he had been at. He said the water was running a river, fair over the weather-board in the alley-way, and for some time he couldn't get the saloon door open, and when he

did he near dropped. There was the whole ship's crew bunched up at one end of the salon, with the long table pushed crossways in front of them. And just in front of the door was the old man, with his shirt-sleeves turned back, very clean and neat, sitting on a little bench, with a brace of pistols either side of him, doing—well, you'd never guess what he was doing-darning stockings, sitting there as peaceable-looking as you two ladies now, with his glasses on his nose, and his ditty-bag open on his knee, though he had his heels dug hard into the deck to keep him from pitching off his bench, and the men were hurtling backwards and forwards all in a bunch at each roll of her. His own mate, all blue cloth and brass buttons, was by his side, straddle-legged over a chair, holding another pair of pistols on the back of it, just as cool as ninepence.

"Macgregor says they both bowed sideways like a pair of crabs, and wished him good-day. Then the old un shifted the shooting-irons a trifle, and invited him to sit down as pleasantly as though it were a sort of picnic they were having, though he had to shout at the top of his voice to be heard above the noise of the waves and the groaning of the ship.

[&]quot;' Mighty good of you to come and call, sir,'

he said; 'wretched weather, too. You'll take something, won't you?'

"The mate says he growled out 'No,' too taken aback even to say 'Thank you,' and stared at them, wondering if it was he or they that was mad—for stark staring mad he was sure some of them must be. Though, to be sure, the old fellow looked sane enough, he said—sort of oily and benevolent, like some old city dad. He had taken up his sewing again—grey socks they were, and him using a monstrous long thread—and went on darning and talking quite calm, though that old hulk, having no masts to steady her, lay over at each roll, till Macgregor felt she could never right herself again, and as if half of himself was left behind when she did.

"'Must have had an uncommon wet pull,' went on the skipper; 'better take something. Whisky, soda, and glasses, steward.'

"The steward was standing among the other men, with his cap on, his bundle in his hands, and a face like a white rat, little pinky eyes shifting here and there and everywhere. Our chap saw him sort of jerk from head to foot, and blink at the old man's words, but he didn't move till—'Whisky and soda and glasses, if you please, steward,' repeated the captain, quite calmly,

but with a snick in his voice like a whip lash, when the fellow dropped his bundle on the table, and, pushing his way round among the others, went to the pantry. There was the sound of a cork being drawn, and a sort of gurgle, as of whisky being decanted down a dry throat, and then the fellow came back with a tray and put it down on the table. The mate thought the men would have wolfed the liquor, but they didn't so much as touch it; only a sort of ugly snarl went up from them in one long note, all from their stomachs. 'It might have been one wolf,' said Macgregor, 'sore and savage with hunger, and thirst, and rage.'

- "'Help yerself,' said the skipper. And suddenly our fellow seemed to wake up and remember the two boys and the men he had left in that leaky boat and the sea they had come through.
- "Go to hell with the drink! Are you coming off with us, or are you not? he cried, flinging round in front of the men and facing the captain. Tell me that—are you coming, or are you not? for, by thunder! I've had enough of this.'
- "'With many thanks, I must decline the pleasure, my engagements being rather pressing to-day,' answered the old man, not in the least disturbed by the mate's fury, but patting down his hair very smooth as he spoke.

- "'You ran up signals of distress, you blackguard!'
- "'I did nothing of the sort. My second officer may have done so, but he's gone on a little voyage on his own account, for which there's no return ticket issued. I am sorry——'
- "'To blazes with your sorriness!' snapped the mate. 'The men—'
- "'We're coming, we're coming!' broke in the men. 'She's not got an hour to float. Hold on, mister; we're coming.' It was a fair pandemonium, says Macgregor. There they were, raging up and down, yapping and howling like wild beasts-haggard, unshaven, and red-eyed with fear and want of sleep; wet to the skin; hoarse with shouting, stamping, and cursing, and hammering on that table with their fists, and yet not attempting to pass it. Just about five feet of deal and red cloth, and not a man crossing it, for all their fury and fear. Their own officer had gone to the door at their first movement, locked it, and stood with his back across it, his pistol in his hand; but there was no need, the table might have been a river of fire. The old man had picked up his pistols, too, but the mate said he didn't believe it was that which stopped 'em. They were in such a state of fury and panic they could

have rushed them in a moment. It was something more—brass, says the mate. I reckon he means a sort of moral, or immoral, force—something in the man himself—that made those fellows as helpless as a flock of sheep penned there before him.

"Then he started to talk, beau-u-ti-ful, says the mate—a voice and a manner that might have belonged to a Bishop. But the things he said! Good God! I couldn't repeat them to you—or anyone else, either. Macgregor says he saw the men one by one curl up under his filthy tongue like bits of paper under a flame. I reckon he had got hold of the scum of the earth, and that they must have pretty well chosen between the gallows and his old hulk. Well, he took those men's lives up one by one between his finger and thumb, as it were, and turned them inside out. 'That there girl in "'Frisco," 'he'd say to one quite gently, and then in a dozen words would paint a picture that 'ud fair make your flesh creep. 'And do you recollect that night at Aden?' or 'those Chinamen in Canton, Smith, and what their throats looked like?' And so on and so on, one unmentionable horror on the top of another; and as he started on each man by name, there it was—as Macgregor said—as if the fire had caught 'em.

"Then he changed his note—told them of the reward they'd have if they got their ship into port safely; of all they could do with the extra money they'd draw, as vivid a picture as the last; and ended up by declaring they could go if they liked. And with this he flung down his pistols in front of them, and stood back against the panelling.

"'Go!' he said—'go! You're free to go. But you won't. I've picked you out of the gutter; I've made men of you, and I know you through and through. You won't go; you'll stick to her and me, and we'll take her in—by God, we'll take her in! You go if you like. Go! I'll keep no one against his will.'

"One man made a sort of bolt for it, says the mate, but they pushed him down somewhere underfoot. And they cursed, and they roared, and they yelled again, but all of it was that they'd stick to him and the ship, and that—blast their souls for ever!—but they'd take her in ter port.

"'There's rum in the store behind you,' said the old man, and he tossed a key across to his officer. 'It's roughish weather,' he said; 'give them a dram apiece, Mr. Courtenay." Macgregor says he'll never forget the name; it fitted

with the brass buttons and the devilish pluck of that young fellow somehow—and all the men backed off into the store for a dram; then, 'Now, sir,' said the old man, picking up his cap, and putting it on mighty carefully, with a pat down of his hair, 'I'll see you to your boat.'

"'It's your last word?' said Macgregor, as he dodged a big sea, and hung on the taffrail, ready to drop into the boat as she lifted.

"' My last word,' repeated the old fellow (and there was a queer twist of his lip that said as plainly as could be, 'and you know it, and I know it, in more senses than one'). please give your Captain my compliments, and thank him for his courtesy, and—good-bye, young man.' By Jove! the mate was in a rage by the time he got his boat back and they were all safe on board again, which was more by good luck than good management. He was like a man possessed, and yet filled with a sort of unwilling admiration for the old blackguard and that officer of his—though it's an ill wind that blows nobody any good, for it's pretty certain that they could never have got back with a full boat. However, in spite of it all, we lay to that night; the whole thing was blackguardly, but it was plucky—a sort of brute courage. Still,

there it was, the villainy of a brute, not a cur, and so we stood by. Then we all know how it tears the vitals out of a man to leave his ship, an agony and a shame beyond all telling. At the first streak of day we were straining our eyes to catch a glimpse of the wreck, but not a sign of her; a black night it was, and grey day, grey sea and sky—ugh! I hate that English Channel—but not a sign of a hull or spar."

- "She might have got away."
- "She never got away. Captain Loveday was his name, too—as I found when we reported her—Captain Loveday. Sounds like spring, and hay-fields, and lavender-bushes, doesn't it, and not a man with the death of some thirty others on his conscience? Loveday! Good Lord!"
- "Perhaps," protested Charlotte, "he did really think that he'd take her in."
- "Bless your heart, no! A child would have known better than that; all the men knew it, too, but he had some sort of power over them, as a desperate man has at times. What I did hear, and what I believe is a fact, was that there was a pretty ugly story against him that would have landed him in a nasty hole if he had got home, and he didn't care to face it. He had gone to face worse, I reckon; but folks don't think about that."

"It's a grim world—this sea world," said Charlotte.

"Life grows sort of grim when it's always standing toe to toe with death; but somehow—I don't know why—it's then that it's most life. What have you got there, eh, Macgregor?"

"I've been making cocoa," answered the mate sourly. "I reckoned the leddies 'ud be wanting something ter warm them, sitting there getting fair chilled ter the bone, whilst you was havering and havering."

"There's the fire," protested the Captain meekly.

"The fire's clean out," crowed his opponent in triumph; "and that there lassie"—pointing a denouncing finger at Charlotte—"looking that wish-washy as though she'd fair run through the floor. Look at that there stove." And we looked at the stove and found it dead black, then looked at the surly little mate, and remembered Captain Loveday and that leaky boat.

Charlotte drew herself out of her chair, yawning, stretching, and, I must own, shivering a little. She is so tall that her white face gleamed like a lovely moon far up among the dangling seaboots and oilskins. Then she suddenly stooped and dropped a kiss on the top of the mate's

head. "You're a brick," she said—"a brick;" and with that sailed off, still with dignity, to our cabin.

If I had done such a thing I should never have had the courage to face either the recipient of my favours or the onlookers during the rest of my natural life. But Charlotte is not a bit like that. "He is such a dear," she said next morning just before breakfast, when I mentioned her exploit, as if that fact alone was quite sufficient justification, while I was certainly the only embarrassed member of the party as I followed her meekly to the table. I suppose that when one is a sort of Diana one can afford to stoop. If I did those kind of things I should be promptly immured in a lunatic asylum.

CHAPTER XVII

"CLOWN: What is the opinion of Pythagoras concerning wild fowl?

"MALVOLIO: That the soul of our grandam might haply inhabit a bird."

Twelfth Night.

It is a glorious day of alternate sunshine and storm, brilliant blue and dense black. It is also bitterly cold, a clear nipping cold that invigorates but does not chill, and Charlotte's cheeks are glowing like roses, while the ship is flying like a bird before the steady westerly wind which keeps every inch of canvas astrain. No wonder, for we are down in the Roaring Forties, and have caught the counter trades. The sea is no longer uncertain; multiply St. Paul's choppy or Cathedral a thousand, thousand times, imagine this host of dignity marching with measured step across an unbounded plain, and you can picture a little the march of the giant waves, rank upon rank, in ordered beauty, across the southern seas, to the fife and drum of the

counter trades. I believe I shall weep and laugh all in a breath to the end of my life when I think of it. And if I live to be a hundred, as most useless people do, the very memory of it will set my blood a-tingling.

There are throngs of birds around the ship, tiny silver-white ice-birds—the souls of children who have died at sea—albatross, Cape hens, huge dusky brown birds, and Molly hawks, and Cape chickens by the dozen. The men have been fishing for albatross from the poop-deck, and have caught three magnificent specimens, one measuring from tip to tip of his outstretched wings close on seven feet. They do not seem in the least frightened when they come on deck, or if they are they hide their feelings with the most perfect dignity, though they must know that they look very far from their best when they are standing, as we all do out of our proper environment. The men kill them for the sake of their breasts, which, deep with the closest and softest feathers, they cure for tippets and muffs for their sweethearts and wives. But I cannot bear the sight of either the captive birds or the feathers for which they have been slain; it is as if some near blood relation were being butchered. They are beautiful creatures indeed, the only blot on their

character being their insatiable greed, which makes them fall an easy victim to the charm of salt pork. Even if they have got off the hook the first time, having tasted the delicacy once, they are bound to return to it again, when their rapacity more than likely costs them their lives.

Some people say that albatross fly right against the wind, but the Captain does not agree with this, and declares that they only fly "close to it." He says he believes they do not sleep for days, for he has often noticed some peculiarly marked birds follow the ship for as much as four days, during which time they could not have closed their eyes, for they would certainly have missed her if they had done so. There seem to be at least seven different sorts of albatross, the biggest, the Diomedia esculans, weighing on an average seventeen pounds, and measuring as much as ten feet from tip to tip of its wings. Some of these birds are curiously flecked and barred with brown, only the very young ones being completely white, while in the same latitudes, commonly between the parallels 30° and 6° south, is also found the black-browed albatross, with curiously heavy satanic-looking markings over its eyes. Of all the albatross there is only one species which ever penetrates north of the

Equator, and this is the *Diomeda bracyura*, noticeable as having a much shorter tail than its fellows.

The birds that sailors call Cape hens must, I think, be Skua gulls, though I am not perfectly certain. It is curious to notice how differently they and the albatross fly. The latter take great sweeping curves, with their feet tucked close under them, and their wings almost motionless, letting the very impetus of their own movement sweep them round, by that unchangeable law of circles, till they are near half-way back again, when they stretch out their feet, turn a little on their sides, and, with an almost imperceptible movement of their wings, sweep forward again. But the Cape hens, which have the most curiously prominent eyes, seeming to enable them to look in any direction without turning their heads, fly more in straight lines, like ducks, with their long legs thrust out flat under their pointed tails. The Cape chickens, which are met with first in latitude 24°, seem to be some sort of petrel, and fly in the most graceful way, with their necks arched back, like the handles of a Grecian vase—in fact, they are altogether the most alluring-looking little birds, appearing, from the fact of their snowy, overlapping feathers

193

being each tipped with black, as if attired in the neatest of shepherd's plaids.

A good many people who we—though not, I think, God—call heathens, believe that the spirit leaves the body in the form of a bird; while not so very long ago the belief obtained equally among Christians, particularly in respect of those who die at sea: for which reason the Finns call the Milky Way "The Birds' Way," believing it to be continually thronged with the white spirits of the departed, winging their flight heavenward. And in an old Breton legend, "Lord Nann and the Korrigan," I think it is called, are some charming lines, running somewhat thus:

"It was a marvel to see, men say, The night that followed the day The lady in earth by her lord lay.

To see two oaks themselves rear From the new-made grave into the air,

And on their branches two doves white Who then were hopping gay and light,

Which sang when rose the morning ray, And then towards heaven sped away."

I often and often wonder when I read of such things, of the stork who brings new life to the childless, of the divine pelican, of the phænix, of the swan who welcomes death with a song, how

much we have really gained by all the crude common sense of this new century, in place of these tender old beliefs. There is a lovely pagan Irish legend, which I am here reminded of, that tells us of a certain lake in Munster, where there were to be found two islands, into the first of which death never came. But old age, sickness, lust, cruelty, and despair reigned there, and did their dread work, till the inhabitants of their own accord put off in their boats to that other isle, where, passing through the gates of death, they reached eternal peace.

To-day we have been keeping a sharp lookout for islands, Marion Isle, Prince Edward's Isle, and the Crozet Isles being all somewhere hereabouts; but there has been no sign of them, or of icebergs either, which it has been our ambition to see, and for which we would willingly have endured any amount of cold; and cold enough it is, in all conscience, even without them. The winds have been a trifle unsteady, and we had reluctantly taken in some sail, but this morning a strange barque came creeping up astern of us, the sight of which exasperated the Captain, so that he set the fore t'gallant and royals again. It was soon made evident through the glasses that the Captain of the strange ship did

not care to risk the additional sail, and in a very short time we were well out of sight of her, while our boat scudded along with the most inspiriting lilt and swing. She is really very human. When nothing is expected of her she is given to all sorts of moods and tempers. She hates having her sails taken in, and shows off then as badly as any beauty cheated out of her finery. She hates, too, a flat calm day, and frets and rolls and pitches in a spirit of sheer, discontented, sullen rage. But see her in full dress, with the wind and the waves courting her, or in a raging storm, which threatens each moment to tear her masts from her, and you realize the audacity and courage which makes her so truly human.

We are still in the Roaring Forties, running what the shell-backs call the "easting-down," where the old tea-clippers used to make such record runs; the Loch Torridon, a similar ship to the one we are now on, having once made the passage, with a heavily loaded ship, from Australia to San Francisco in forty-six days, and coming home one trip up to the hatches with wool from Sydney in eighty; again running out to Melbourne in ballast in but sixty-nine days.

The men have been in the best of good spirits, and have been singing scraps of chanties on and

off all day; this evening they chantied up the royals—taking the halliards to the capstan—in fine style, the tramp of their feet keeping time to the tune of "Haul on the Bowlin'," which I have heard them singing a dozen times since we have been on board, but never twice the same. However, it generally runs somehow like this, though the words sound very poor without the deep, rollicking voices and the tramp, tramp of the men's feet, the stinging wind, the salt on your lips, and the joy of life in your heart:

Solo: "Haul on the bowlin', the packet is a rollin'."

Chorus: "Haul on the bowlin', the bowlin' haul!"

Solo: "Haul on the bowlin', to London we are going."

Chorus: "Haul on the bowlin', the bowlin' haul!"

Solo: "Haul on the bowlin', the fore and maintop bow-lin'."

Chorus: "Haul on the bowlin', the bowlin' haul."

Solo: "Haul on the bowlin', the skipper he's a'growlin'."

Chorus: "Haul on the bowlin', the bowlin' haul."

Another chanty which I have been picking up by degrees, a bit here and a bit there, is one that the men often sing when they are setting sail or hauling at the halliards; though not when they have them at the capstan, perhaps because it is so short and choppy, and fits better with the

action of pulling than with the steady tramp round and round:

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"Oh! haul pulley, yeo-o-o-
                     Cheerily, men!
 Oh! long and strong, yeo-o-o-
                     Cheerily, men!
 Oh! yeo-with a will
                     Cheerily, men!
 Cheerily, cheerily, o-o-o-!
"A long haul for Mrs. Skinner-er-er-
                     Cheerily, men!
 Kiss her well before dinner-er-er-
                     Cheerily, men!
 At her, boys, and win her!
                     Cheerily, men!
 Cheerily, o-o-o-o-!
"A strong pull for Mrs. Bell,
                     Cheerily, men!
 Who likes a lark full well-
                     Cheerily, men!
 What's more, will never tell!
                     Checrily, men!
 Cheerily, o-o-o-o-!
"O haul and split the blocks!
                     Cheerily, men!
 O haul and stretch her luff!
                     Cheerily, men!
 Hang on and brace her up!
                     Cheerily, men!
 Cheerily, o-o-o-!"
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Imagine the steady pull at the halliards in the long lines, and the jerk, as one hand is passed

over the other, at each short line; then in the last verses the sudden quickening of the rhythm, as the ropes are twisted round the pins, and you get a little of the swing of the song, and realize how it fit into all the men's movements. None of these chanties, indeed, seem to have been thought out in cold blood, but appear to be an outward expression of straining muscle and quick movement, some sort of sentence or story being evolved naturally from the oft-repeated "Ehhai! Eh hai-e-e! Eh-heu! Yo-ho-yo-hay, and up she goes!" and suchlike expressions.

CHAPTER XVIII

"I boarded the king's ship; now on the beak,
Now in the waist, the deck, in every cabin,
I flamed amazement; sometime I'ld divide,
And burn in many places; on the topmast,
The yards and bowsprit, would I flame distinctly,
Then meet and join."

The Tempest.

The intense cold has brought on a perfect epidemic of toothache, and to-night there was quite a mustering of patients at the saloon door waiting to have their teeth drawn by the Captain, who was in his element, with a collection of dentist's instruments done up in a piece of newspaper. The light was so bad that I—having, as my friends say, a steady nerve, and, as my enemies say, no heart—was pressed into service to hold the candle, a tallow affair which guttered awfully and terribly, close above each patient's face, while the Captain searched out the offending fang, first taking off his coat and turning up his sleeves in a way that looked like business. As the operation was long and anything but painless,

and gas or chloroform out of the question, the mate sat on the patient's chest to keep him downwith the oddest effect, for as the ship rolled, and the mate jerked to and fro, the shrieks of the victim sounded like the squeak being pressed from the bosom of a wax doll. Two of the apprentices were operated on, coming up grinning, and retiring spitting blood violently, and yet, to their eternal credit be it said, still grinning, though probably only in anticipation of the glass of rum with which each was revived when the operation was over. After the apprentices came Sails; and then Kruger, who never turned a hair. The perpendicular lines at either side of his mouth were of necessity elongated as he opened it to its utmost width, but otherwise not a muscle twitched, not a single wrinkle—if one might so call the deep ridges that appear as if cut out with a jack-knife in his fumed-oak countenance—shifted. Only across his face spread for a moment that same vast grin with which he had once viewed the glass of shandygaff, as he regarded the enormous fang which, after a long and arduous struggle, the Captain held out to him between his forceps.

The next operation was one of the funniest things I have ever seen; which goes without say-

ing, seeing that the patient was the one-legged Irish cook, a personage with whom every single comical thing that happens on the ship always seems to associate itself. He is so immensely burly and broad that it was with difficulty that he could be squeezed on to the settee, and even then it could only be accomplished by means of sticking his wooden leg up along the back; while the mate, perched on his chest, looked like some small perky bird on a sheep's back; and I held the candle, shaking helplessly with suppressed laughter at the picture before me. The huge man, with his great goggle eyes staring doggedly up at the ceiling, and his humorous Hibernian mouth twisted all awry with apprehension, the little mate holding on as if for dear life, and the Captain poised above his formidable "case," with his forceps in his hand, peering anxiously down into the yawning cavern beneath him, which, with its ancient fangs—like prehistoric landmarks or lightning-blasted tree-trunks, scattered far and wide—made a picture that could never be quite forgotten.

"Sure, Captain," murmured the patient, "be quick, now, fur I'd rather have a drop of the cratur in my mouth than ivery tooth there. But be as aisy as ye can, fur the Blessed Virgin's sake."

Thus exhorted, the Captain leant forward, prizing one knee against the bulky sufferer's shoulders, caught hold of the fang indicated by Denis firmly between his forceps, and simply put his whole weight into one most stupendous pull. The struggle was a hard one, though, and in my anxiety to cast as much light as possible upon the scene, I leant forward and incautiously tipped the candle I was holding the tiniest weeniest bit. "That's capital," grunted the Captain from between clenched teeth, and, encouraged by his approbation, I tipped it a little, just the very minutest little bit, more, when, to my unspeakable horror, a great blob of tallowwhich had already begun to accumulate on one side of it-rolled off, and plumped down full upon one of Denis's eyes, which, in his effort to bear the pain, were luckily tightly shut at that moment, then spread out into the neatest cast over the whole of the lid.

The effect was instantaneous. "The devil!" shouted the patient, with a bellow like an enraged bull, and a plunge that shot the mate almost up to the ceiling, while the sufferer's flesh and blood leg, released suddenly from the pressure, gave a tremendous, involuntary kick, the cushions slipped from under his head, and

he hurtled over on his back to the deck, his wooden member at the same moment jerking violently backward, and catching the poor Captain the most appalling crack across his head, literally felling him at a blow.

"Oh, what a fall was there, my countrymen! Then I, and you, and all of us fell down."

Though, as a matter of fact, I—the cause of all the woe—was the only one left standing amid the general wreckage.

Slowly, very slowly, the heap of men disentangled themselves; first the mate crept out from the mountain of flesh above him, then the cook rolled ponderously on one side, and proceeded to clamber laboriously up by the help of the settee, his mouth and one eye wide open, the other masked still in its coating of thick, congealed tallow. Finally the Captain uprose, staring in a bewildered, stupefied way at the forceps that he still held in his right hand. And well he might stare, for there—in spite of all this chaos and upheaval, or perhaps by reason of it—was the tooth, disinterred, disunited for ever from its owner. The three men gazed at it for a moment in the utmost bewilderment; and then again, rubbing his entombed eye curiously and

tenderly with the back of his immense hand, Denis ejaculated:

"The devil!"

"No, indeed," I put in hastily; "it was nothing of the sort. It was I—and the tallow."

Then suddenly the comical side of it struck us all at once, and we laughed until we were helpless with laughter.

It is this Irish cook, a typical son of Erin, who I always feel stands next to the ship's cat in importance. He possesses a brogue one could cut with a knife, about which the other day I was chaffing him unmercifully; but, as usual, he was equal to the occasion, with a witty play on the two meanings of the word.

"Begorra, marm," he answered. "Afther all, it's only one brogue that I've got, which is less than most folks, me peg-leg being a great savin' entirely in shoe-leather, if it's nothing else at all, at all."

He and the young Scotch lawyer have struck up a curious friendship—curious, I say, because, like the herbs of Leo and the herbs of Lunar, which old Culpeper tells us "are the one moist and the other dry," the one is as jovial and merryeyed as the other is grave and self-contained; though the fact that they have some very ex-

cellent jokes in common is evident from the roars of laughter which often proceed from the galleydoor, where Denis has a trick of sitting, with his wooden member stuck out before him, taking the air. The cook's boy, as notorious a little rascal as ever lived, lashed it up tightly one day to the handle of the door of the sail-maker's room, which is next to the galley, so that when Mr. Crawford strolled off, still smiling from some last sally, and Denis, after a few moments' quiet chuckling, triedneedlessly to say unsuccessfully—to pick himself up from his seat on the deck, the language was fine and bold and sweeping, while the perpetrator of the mischief was seen lurking behind a mast, at a safe distance, in the precise attitude of "The Little Vulgar Boy."

"Denis," I said a few minutes later, having, luckily, happened to pass along the deck about that time and cut the Gordian knot, while "the imp" retreated into safety up the rigging, "I wonder you are not ashamed of yourself, to pick out all the nastiest, dirtiest words in the English language to disgrace yourself with, just because a naughty little boy plays you a silly trick."

"Bless your sowl, marm!" answered the villain, with a look of the most amazed innocence possible; "sure it's not on a spaltheen loike that

you'd be after havin' me waste good Oirish swear wurds at all, is it, now?"

To-day we are in latitude 40°, longitude 75°, north-west of St. Paul's. For the last few nights the moon has looked most strange and portentous, distorted to a sort of pear shape, appearing bigger than I have ever seen it, and rising, the colour of the setting sun, out of a solid bank of cloud on the horizon. So uncanny and fearsome has been its aspect that Charlotte is actually frightened at it—it itself; declaring it is like a moon in a bad dream, that might all of a sudden turn to some gigantic Moloch—all mouth—and devour us at one gasp. It is truly a delight to see Charlotte; since the last illness, she seems really to have started life afresh, and looks firm and brown and hard, moving with that sort of spring that is only obtained when the very act of moving becomes a pleasure, while she is once more sane and cheerful and well balanced, with that wholesome sanity which arises from an absence of petty worry and life in the open air.

The sky has all day been as blue as blue could be, and yet with a sort of hard, vindictive expression about it which kept the Captain—though he was supposed to be writing up the log in his cabin—hovering between the poop-deck, from

whence he could scan the horizon, and the rapidly falling barometer in the chart-room.

About three o'clock, for no apparent reason, the water began to quicken, and great white waves came rolling up on the weather stern—warhorses, restless and turbulent, the outriders of a mighty white squall. The very first slap of spray on deck brought the Captain running up, when he ordered us to our cabins and the watch from below to turn out, the second order being obeyed more literally than the first, for we only stayed below for just as long as it took us to scramble into long-boots and oilskins, with which we have now fitted ourselves out completely from the slop-chest.

By the time we were on deck again both watches were at work, and the main-sail, the fore-sail, and spanker furled. Then, as the blue of the distant sea was raked up into a wall of driving foam, the fore and main top-gallant, the fore and main upper topsails and jib were also taken in, leaving her under the two lower topsails and the fore top-mast staysail. The men worked like creatures possessed, getting in the wildly flapping canvas, and snugged her down just as the storm reached us with a mighty rushing wind such as one does not often meet with out of the tropics, sweeping

up the sea and drenching the men at the halliards in a moment. Until the middle of the dogwatch the wind raged, then suddenly it shifted from the nor'-west to the west, and until morning beat up the sea in all directions, making it resemble nothing so much as a witch's caldron.

Till nearly one o'clock we stayed up on deck, fascinated by the effects of the storm. The lightning was wonderful, both forked and sheet, playing incessantly on every side, enveloping the men in the rigging in a blaze of light, and clinging along the running gear so that every brace and lift, halliard and stay looked like a fine line of living fire, till the changing wind at last "found a place to blow from," as the sailors say, and swept on us in heavy gusts from the east, with such force that our poor ship was denuded down to her main upper topsail only; and after we had been badly pooped more than once we hove to.

All the weather-cloths put up round the poopdeck were soon in tatters with the tearing waves, and if we had not been securely lashed up we should more than likely have been swept overboard. Even the Captain was, I could see, a little anxious, not at all liking, as he has before confessed to me, to see his most precious "she" pooped in that fashion.

Nearer and nearer came the thunder, till it seemed as if the very chariots of heaven and the horses thereof were rolling over our heads, while the entire sky was ablaze with lightning. Soon after eleven the strangest and most uncanny spectacle that I could possibly imagine was to be seen, for on every mast-truck, and at the tip of every yard, appeared a ball of fire which, with the incessant rolling of the ship, danced as if some Satanic juggler were playing at cup-andball; while at the same time all the wire gear of the ship was ablaze with light, until one felt one might have been sailing on some phantom fireship. For nearly two hours this extraordinary spectacle lasted, while we had no more thought for the passing of time, for hunger, cold, and wet, than if the world was coming to an end, as, indeed, Charlotte declared she more than once suspected. Just at the very worst the mate scrambled up on to the deck where we were sitting lashed—with our feet in empty buckets, to keep them from the swirl of water -looking, indeed, like a spirit rising from the vasty deep, so enveloped was he in a flame of white light, the lightning seeming to cling round him like a winding-sheet.

"It is wonderful, isn't it?" I shrieked out

through the blast, at the top of my voice, on which he came nearer, and stared at us curiously, as if he suspected us of being some creatures of the tempest, then, as a fresh blaze of lightning illuminated us, grasped our identity and shouted back:

"You've no business here. But, by Jove! isn't it grand? The ship's fair bewitched."

Ah! that was it: the ship was bewitched, and we were all bewitched. A phantom ship, with phantom men among the rigging. No one looked human or natural, even Charlotte pressed close against my side. Surely never before had her eyes been so large and bright, her face so clearly cut and white. The mate, too—why, he might have been Vander-decken himself; and the very sailors in their sea-boots and oilskins appeared distorted and strange, while their voices sounded harsh and unfamiliar.

"There are more men here than there ever were before. The ship is alive with them. Look!" shouted Charlotte at my ear. I know she shouted, by the vibration of her body against mine, otherwise she might not have raised her voice above a whisper, for I could only just catch what she said. "It's a case of 'my brother and my brother's son.' Do you remember?"

Of course I remembered perfectly:

"My brother and my brother's son Stood by me knee to knee; My brother and I pulled at one rope, But never a word spoke he."

Charlotte had "sensed" my thought, as she so often does. Of course, both watches were on deck, and the men, hurrying hither and thither, appeared far more numerous than usual. But it was not only that: the ship was bewitched, as the mate said, and the uncertain figures of many more men than had ever signed on seemed to throng her decks. Up in the rigging and along the deck, now the dimmest shadows, now silhouetted sharply out against the white flare of lightning, I seemed to note them. Strange men, with pigtails and quaintly cut clothes, with skirts to their knees, and coats all uncouth with big flapping pockets and cuffs-men who had sailed with Drake and Frobisher, Cook and Tasman; who had loved the sea so well in their life, and on whom the stress and storm and eternal fascination of it had laid such a hold that Heaven itself had proved weak in its appeal. I remembered that Plato had declared ghosts to be the spirits of those who loved this earthly life so well that, when the soul was separated from the body,

it still lingered wistfully round its old haunts. And so it seemed to me that on the wings of the storm came thronging to-night the souls of many seamen long since dead—up along the yard, at the halliard and braces, hauling at the ropes, knee to knee, the living with the dead. Even now down in my bunk I seem to hear their wailing voices; and it is not the cry of the sea-birds, as I know, for they dropped away hours ago, scared by the storm. That ship we saw but lately, which crept up so silently on our bows—I cannot but think that she was the *Flying Dutchman* herself, and that Vanderdecken, disdaining to follow, yet pursued us with his curses.

As the old tale goes, many, many years ago Vanderdecken determined to round the Cape of Good Hope, in spite of contrary and foreboding winds and the manifest disapproval of St. Antonia. In those days the wishes of the saints were made very clearly manifest, and it was ill-fortune for anyone to oppose them. But the Dutch captain would take a "No" neither from man nor spirit, and swore by his immortal soul that he would round the Cape if it took him to Eternity to do it. And so, being taken at his word—as blasphemers so often were in those days—he still tacks to and fro, to and fro in his phantom ship,

in sunshine and storm, fair weather and foul, trying to pass that point where his terrible task, his long-enduring life in death may end; for there is one other chance, just one, and it is this: If any pure maiden, out of the pity of her heart, will push out to him in a boat from the Cape or some passing vessel, and give her life as a willing bride into his keeping, then will the curse be lifted. Charlotte has more than once suggested the rôle for me, as no such bride has hitherto been found. But I feel that I could not do with anybody so absolutely bored by the sea, and all that appertains to it, as Vanderdecken must be. If I had lived a few hundreds of years ago, when he was still new to the task, it would have been different—perhaps!

CHAPTER XIX

"——in a sieve I'll thither sail,
And like a rat without a tail,
I'll do, I'll do, and I'll do."

Macheth.

Some of the quaintest of all stories seem to hang round the sea and those that sail thereon; while on a night like this one can scarcely wonder at even the weirdest belief in all things supernatural. There is, I remember, a delightful Mohammedan legend of a certain captain and crew, who, being in the greatest danger and distress, their ship having sprung a leak far from land, called upon the blessed St. Gadir Sahib for help, bribing him at the same time with the promise of the profits of the voyage and two small models of ships, the one in silver and the other in gold. The saint at the time of these prayers was under the hands of his barber, being shaved; and, excited either by the danger of his worshippers or the promised rewards for his intervention, jumped up in such a hurry that the looking-glass he held

flew out of his hand, and, covering the hole in the ship, effectually stopped the leak.

Not nearly so praiseworthy was the conduct of a fisherman that Erasmus tells us of, who in a moment of great peril at sea promised to St. Christopher a wax image as large as himself, which promise he bellowed out so continuously that a fellow-sailor, more cautious than he, nudged him in the side, and reminded him that he could never pay such a sum as it would cost, even if he sold everything he had.

"You fool!" answered the other; "do you imagine I am speaking in earnest? If I once touch the shore I shall only give him a tallow candle."

The Portuguese sailor, whose patron is St. Anthony, ties his image to the mast, and prays to it fervently in time of storm; but if this is fruitless, the poor saint, or, rather, his effigy, is mercilessly beaten with sticks to gain his attention by force, as persuasion has failed, the worshipper being apparently not in the least afraid of the saint—whom he surely must regard as rather a poor-spirited person—taking his revenge in any future storm.

The lights of St. Elmo—those electric balls at the mastheads and yard-arms that we have seen

to-night—used to be regarded with the greatest veneration by old seamen, especially the Spanish, who fully believed that they portended a safe passage through the storm. Columbus, in the story of his second voyage, writes that "those lights were seen which mariners affirm to be the body of St. Elmo, with seven lighted tapers at the topsail; in beholding which they (the crew) chanted many litanies and orisons, holding it certain that in the tempest in which he appears no one is in danger."

The Portuguese, on the other hand, regarded these lights as anything but favourable, calling them "Corpus Santos," or the bodies of the saints. Fryer mentions this in his "Travels," but adds: "I think I am not too positive in relating them to be a meteor-like substance, exhaled in the night (for except then they show not themselves), kindled by violent motion of the air, fixing themselves to those parts of the ship which are most attractive; for I can witness they usually spent themselves at the spindles of the topmast-head or about the iron hoops of the yard-arms, and if any went towards them they shifted to some part of the like nature."

The water-spouts, "termed from its essence *Prestes* by the Greeks," seem also to have been

looked upon with much superstition, the crew that Columbus carried with him being absolutely wild with terror at the sight of them, and finding—or so they declared—that the only possible means of turning them from their purpose of overwhelming the ship was the continual repetition of passages from St. John the Evangelist; while in the Levant, when a water-spout was seen, a mariner knelt down by the main-mast, and, holding in one hand a knife with a black handle, always taken for the purpose and kept handy, read aloud the Gospel of St. John. On coming to the words "Et verbum caro factum est, et habitavit in nobis," he would turn in the direction of the water-spout and cut the air athwart it, when it would collapse with a great noise.

Old Gervase of Tilbury recounts, in all good faith, one most delightful story of how some people in a remote fishing village were coming out of church on Sunday morning, when they saw a ship's anchor fastened to a heap of stones, with its cable reaching up into the clouds. Presently it was seen that the cable began to tighten and strain as though the aerial crew were endeavouring to heave the anchor—imagine the excitement of this after yawning through a very long and probably very dull sermon. But still it stuck

among the stones, while up in the clouds, far above the heads of the crowd, were heard voices clamorous in an argument, which was cut short by a sailor sliding down the rope. Unfortunately, the people, in their eagerness to see this supernatural Jack Tar, crowded so closely round him that, like a fish on dry land, he died from an insufficiency of his natural element; and after a time his shipmates, not daring, I suppose, to risk a like fate, cut the cable and sailed away, the anchor they left behind being melted down, as a memento of the event, into clasps and hinges for the church doors.

In this story, as in all others of its kind, one is possessed by a perfect hunger for details. What was the man like? how was he dressed? where was he buried? and was the anchor of the same pattern as are our own to-day? But on all these points old Gervase is discreetly silent, evidently determined not to gratify any paltry curiosity as to details.

After all, the funniest belief of all was the widespread one that Solan geese were hatched out of barnacles, or "remora," as they used to be called. Old Butler mentions this fact in his "Hudibras," though I rather suspect there was a sort of mental wink behind his statement; but Gerard believed

most implicitly in the theory, and Thomas Johnson, in his edition of the famous herbal, appends this note to the chapter upon these strangely begotten fowl:

"The burnacles, whose fabulous breed my author here sets down, were found by some Hollanders (to wit, Baretz and his men) to have another origin, and that by eggs, as other birds have, so they, in their third voyage to find out the north-east passage to China, at about the eighteenth degree and eleven minutes northerly latitude, found two little islands, in one of which they found abundance of these geese sitting upon their eggs." Poor Gerard! What would he have said if he had ever been able to read the flat contradiction of his own words appended to his own book? That Solan geese should be hatched from mere eggs is such a banal commonplace in comparison with his theory. "What our eyes have seen and our hands have touched we shall declare," he declares, in his chapter on these weirdly begotten birds, and goes on to assert: "There is a small island in Lancashire, called the Pile of Flanders, wherein are found to be broken pieces of old and disused ships, some of which have been cast hither by shipwreck; and also the trunks and bodies of old rotten trees, cast there

by storms likewise, wherein is found a certain sperm or froth, which in time breedeth into certain shells, in shape like those of a muskell, but sharp-pointed and of a white colour, wherein is contained a thing in form like a lace of silk" (the tentacles of the barnacle, we must presume), "finely woven, as it were, together, one end of which is fastened into the inside of the shell, the other is made fast to the belly of a rude mass or lump, which in time cometh unto the form of a bird. When it is perfectly formed the shell gapeth open, and the first thing that appeareth is the aforesaid lace or string; next comes the legs of a bird hanging out; and as it groweth greater it openeth the shell by degrees, till at length it is all come forth and hangeth only by the bill; a short time after it comes to full maturity, and falleth into the sea, where it gathereth feathers and groweth to a fowl, bigger than a mallard and less than a goose, having black legs and bill or beak, and feathers black and white in such a manner as a magpie, or, as it is called in some places, 'Pie-aneth'; while the people of Lancashire call it by no other name but a true goose."

The universal credence accorded to the belief regarding this much-discussed bird is proved by

the fact that at one time it became the subject of much ecclesiastical discussion. "Men of religion," says one old writer, "eat barnacles on fastinge dayes, because they be not engendered of flesh, wherein, as methinketh, they erre. For if a man had eaten of Adam's legge"—could there be found a more delightfully far-drawn comparison?—"he had eaten fleshe; yet Adam was not engendered of Fader or Moder, but that flesshe came wonderingly of the earth, so this flesshe comes wonderingly of the tree."

"So rotten sides of broken ships do change To barnacles; oh, transformation strange. 'Twas first a green tree, then a gallant hull, Lately a mushroom, then a flying gull."

That both Charlotte and I pin our faith on Gerard rather than Johnson, that we believe implicitly in all that Gervase has to tell us, and in the assertion of Agobad, Archbishop of Lyons, who declares that thunder and lightning can be produced by the will of men called "tempestarii," goes without saying; also that there is a certain country in the clouds from which voyage ships whose owners buy the corn injured by these storms from the very destroyers themselves; also we hold it as matter of faith that, as James VI. asserts, Agnes Sampson sailed the seas

in a sieve and rolled up waves the size of haystacks, and that the Devil causes dust-storms by dancing at his own wedding with a witch, while, from the frequency of such storms, we must believe that he inclines to a most liberal polygamy. We believe in it all—of course we do! Why, the very diverse winds and storms from which we have been suffering this last week have all been caused—it is no good laughing, for every man on the ship could tell you how true it is—by the death of a pig.

Kill a pig on board ship, and a storm will follow. This is certain—so certain that fresh pork is eaten with one eye ever alert for the "pigwind." Old Butler, who was brutally coarse, but wise, knowing the ways of pigs to a nicety—perhaps it was a case of "fellow-feeling makes us wondrous kind"—thus extols their intelligence:

"And now that hogs can see the wind, And storms at distance coming find."

There you are! That pigs understand the ways of the winds is proved beyond doubt. From understanding it is only one step to controlling. Still, as I write, I picture that pig balancing itself on the taffrail, and laughing from ear to ear at the mischief it has caused, and is still likely to cause, judging by the appalling tumult of wind and wave.

All night the storm has raged, the wrath of the vindictive porker remaining, apparently, unappeased. After breakfast, while Charlotte and I were in our cabin making our beds and generally tidying up—for we do not care to have the steward within touch of any of our belongingsthere was the most terrific crash over our heads, and then a grinding vibration that made me feel as if every tooth in my head was being drawn out at once. Hurrying into long-boots and coats, we staggered, splashing through the water in the alley-way, up on to the deck, saw a big sea coming, and made a dash for the companion. Charlotte was first, and half-way up when it caught us, the mate, who was luckily on the poop, reaching the top step in one bound, sitting down on it and catching her by her shoulders; while the Captain, who was on the main-deck, hung on to my feet as the water surged over us in an avalanche of green—deafening and blinding.

"Now," said the Captain, as we shook the water out of our hair, while it poured in rivers from our oilskins, "you ladies will just go below and bide there."

"Please," pleaded Charlotte—one little word with her lips and a hundred with her eyes.

"It's no fit for you to be on deck; we're in

such a mess now as ever was!" blustered the Captain, trying to avoid looking at her. "If you stay——"

"I'll lash them firm to the rail of the poop, with their feet in buckets to keep the water off them. It's real stuffy below, with all the ports shut," interposed the mate benevolently.

"Very well, very well. Only make haste about it—and, mind, you take the responsibility, and not I—then call out the watch from below and get that boom lashed. She'll be tearing the heart out of her, with all this jigging."

Jigging! It was, indeed, a mild word for the horrible, jarring wrench which every moment shook the ship from stem to stern, and buried the lee taffrail on the main-deck deep under water. As we clambered up the last step of the companion and on to the shuddering deck we saw the cause of all the uproar: the spanker boom had broken loose—the great boom to which we had been so often lashed, which had seemed to us a very mountain of safety. Hung only by the swivel with which it was fastened to the mainmast, with all its guys and stays lashing futilely through the grey mist above it, it swung to and fro, lurching with a terrific impetus to starboard at every roll of the vessel, and swinging well over

the taffrail out above the hungry waste of waves. Another ten minutes and we should have been lashed to it, out over the water—or, if the lashing had not held, in it. It was by no means a pleasant thought. In the future I know I shall dream about it, but for the time there was no place for fear: the wild turmoil, the tumult, the excitement, were too intense.

The port watch were already at work, trying to clear the deck somewhat of the hopeless medley of splintered wood and tackle of all sorts with which it was littered; while the Captain's grimly shut mouth and restless activity, as he directed the men, showed his anxiety. Indeed, it seemed pretty well impossible that the very planks of the ship should not be torn to ribbons, strained past all endurance by the jarring vibration; and into the back of my mind crept the thought that he had given in to our desire to remain on deck, and the mate's rather inadequate plea of the stuffiness of the cabins, because of the thought that, after all, it was, perhaps, as well to have us at hand in case of accidents.

A few moments more, and the watch below came hurrying up, most of them with bare feet, struggling into their oilskins as they ran. It is always a matter of wonder and admiration to me

the way the watch from below come up to the scratch; there may be a little swearing and grumbling—there most probably is—but up they come, alive and alert, ready for anything, despite the fact that they have been awakened from the heavy slumber of utter fatigue. People do not generally look on these old shell-backs as saints, or martyrs, or heroes; they remember that their language is apt to be lurid, and that they are often given, when on shore, to strong drink-who can wonder, remembering the only other amusements possible to them?—but they forget that for months and months they have been carrying their lives in their hands; that they have been living on food that the inmates of a prison would not be expected to tolerate; that never, night or day, have they been certain of an hour's unbroken rest, or known what it was to have a sleep out, or for weeks on end to be for one moment really dry or warm. Only the other day I read that England was parting with her sailing-ships, selling them off one by one to foreign nations. If she but knew it, it is not only the ships she is selling, it is a type of man, primitive, brave, and simple, from whom one could wish a hundred thousand men to be begotten in these nervewracked days.

The deck being to some slight extent cleared, there came the task of muzzling the great boom, which seemed every moment more and more like a thing possessed. Both watches, each man with one knee bent and one leg straight, their feet pressed with all possible leverage against the deck, swung their bodies over the swinging boom till it hung straight along the poop in its proper position; then, with the muscles on their bare legs swelling like whipcords, held it there, despite the rolling of the ship, while the mate ran lightly as a cat up the mizzen. From the mast he launched out on to the gaff, cautiously readjusting himself so as to have, as far as possible, the full use of his hands, till he hung by his knees only, and began the fixing of a temporary vang. shall never forget the sight of all those men flung across the boom, with straining muscles, and having throats thrown back, open mouths, and fixed eyes, all telling of the intensest interest; while the Captain himself stood rigid at the wheel, his anxiety visible in every line of his face and figure, knowing well that if he let the ship go off her course for a moment the mate must inevitably be jerked clean out of the rigging. tension was awful, and I heard Charlotte catch her breath in a sob; while a queer sound that

was half a gasp, half a curse of pure relief, ran down the line of men, as the vang was fixed, the new guys rove and let down to them, and the little man swung himself up on to the gaff, now quietened by the firm, familiar pull of the stayropes, to commence the return journey.

At last the worst seemed really over, and, having been unlashed, we had just adjourned to our cabin to prepare the cups of Bovril, declared by Charlotte as being absolutely necessary at this juncture to the welfare of the mate and Captain, when we were startled by another appalling crash, and, running to the door, found that one of the sheets of the big main top-gallant had smashed and fallen, cutting its way deep into the deck, but, thank God! touching nobody, though providing fresh work for the wet and weary men in clewing up and making fast the ripping sail till there was time to repair it properly.

CHAPTER XX

"Claret is a liquor for boys; port for men; but he who aspires to be a hero must drink brandy."—Samuel Johnson.

That the fatal rule of three holds good on board ship as well as elsewhere is not to be doubted, for in the evening another length of bulwarks was stripped clean away by the waves, and "she" had to be eased off a little, altering her course from east by south-east to north, while the very same sea sent me with such force into the scuppers that I was afraid for some time that my knee was broken. Indeed, now I am lying safely in my bunk, and have come to the conclusion that it is nothing more than a bad bruise, I feel like Mr. Squeers, of whom his daughter wrote: "It is doubtful if he will ever recover the use of his legs, which prevents him from holding the pen," though I am glad to say that I am not "screaming out loud all the time I write," like that sensitive young female. Now, at last, I trust that the vindictive spook of that pig is appeased, and we may hope to enjoy some peace again.

While Charlotte was preparing the Bovril this morning, I heard her murmur something about putting some brandy in the mate's, remarking that he looked ill; which was true enough, for the poor fellow had been having a bad time of it with toothache for several days. As he sniffed at the large cup which she handed him, he remarked that it smelt of brandy. "Just a little drop," said Charlotte in her sweet way; "it is so cold, and you look simply worn out."

As he swallowed it at one gulp, and lurched off to his cabin, for it was his watch below, apparently overcome with fatigue, Charlotte turned and remarked to me that nothing would do him so much good as a real long sleep, and in this I agreed. So far, so good. But, as you will see, there was more to follow.

Four hours later, while we were up on deck, the third mate came and informed the Captain that the first mate was so dead asleep that he could not wake him, try as he would.

"He was worn out," declared Charlotte, and looked at the "Old Man" with such big and meaning eyes that he good-naturedly decided he would take the watch himself, for there was no doubt that the mate had been having a hard time of it during the last few days.

Twelve-thirty: I am still awake, and feel I must write down the latest development of the great Bovril mystery. A moment or two before twelve I heard the Second go to the mate's cabin, which is next door, and call him. Call him! Shout at him, bellow at him, shake him. I could hear the bump, bump, against the wainscoting, but only muffled grunts from the mate. Then came a gurgling sound, which told me plainly as words that the water-bottle was being emptied over the sleeper's head, and still only grunts in reply. By this time Charlotte was aroused, and demanded what all the noise was about.

"They are trying to wake the mate," I said, and fancied she grew very red, though, perhaps, it was only the effect of the candle-light on her face as she peered up from her bunk.

We heard the Captain's quick, decisive step enter the next cabin. There was the sound of more running water, more shaking, more straight talking, and then came the mate's voice, very faint and weak, inquiring, like Bill the Lizard in "Alice in Wonderland," where he was and what had happened.

"You've missed one watch, you lazy swine! What are you thinking of, I'd like to know? Get up and go on deck—get up, I say!" came

the Captain's voice, and the sound of more banging against the panelling. "You're drunk, that's what you are—drunk!"

- "Not drunk," urged the mate, quite gently—
 "not drunk—sleepy."
 - "Sleepy!"
- "Yes, sleepy. How can a fellow be drunk, with nothing to make him drunk, I want to know? Now, tell me that." And his voice was mildly persuasive and tolerant, as if he was talking to a child.
- "What did you have before you turned in yesterday?"
- "Yesterday!" ejaculated the mate, and I could almost see his jaw drop—"yesterday?"
- "Yes, yesterday at twelve o'clock. It's past midnight now, though you don't seem to grasp the fact. Out of that, now!"
- "Bovril," said the mate weakly, and we heard him roll to the edge of his bunk, draw himself upwards, and lean heavily against the woodwork at the end—"Bovril."
- "Bovril! It must have been a damned powerful bull that Bovril was made out of!" snorted the Captain. "Now then, pull yourself together and get up on deck, in double-quick time, too."

I suppose Mr. Macgregor did pull himself to-

gether, for we heard a good deal of rolling about next door, then a shuffling, stamping sound that told me he was getting into his long-boots, and finally the stump, stump, stump of his feet overhead on the poop-deck, growing steadier each moment.

"Charlotte," I said, peering over into the bunk below, where my liege lady was lying supiciously quiet, "how much brandy did you put in the mate's broth?"

"I mixed it with hot water," she answered meekly, her face aflame.

"Oh, ye gods!" I ejaculated; "mixed it with hot water? Say a tablespoonful—"

"Ye-e-s-s. Oh yes, quite."

"And filled it up with brandy—a breakfastcup—a large-sized breakfast-cup?"

"I hate to be mean," protested Charlotte, then returned to her old argument, obstinately, as very gentle people will. "He was simply worn out, Crabsticks. Do you think—"

I knew the appeal there would be in her eyes, so I blew out the candle that she might not see me laughing, and put an end to the conversation by wishing her a hurried good-night. It is a funny world, and the funniest part of it is the unlikely things that the unlikeliest people do.

Once more we are on our true course. I speak for the mate as well as for the rest of the crew. "Poor lassie! She meant well," he says, and bears her no malice for the headache which has only too evidently racked him all day. The sky is cloudless; it is far warmer, though the air is still sharp, and to-night we all gathered once more on the deck watching the stars, and welcoming as a long-lost friend Orion's Belt, which hangs across the sky astern of us. The sea looks nearly black, save where it is broken by the short, sharp crests of the waves, or the gleam of light from the ocean of pale luminous gold which floods the eastern sky, shot with radiation, like Jacob's heavenly ladder, of delicate silver light. The sails are all set and filled with a steady breeze that sends us silently and swiftly on our way, having to-day made a run of two hundred and fifty miles. Some of the men are busied at the halliards, and have started a chanty, a big Irishman named Connor taking the solo, and singing, with one eye on the poop-deck—for he knows our love for chanties—so plainly that we can hear every word:

Solo: "From Boston Harbour we set sail,
And the wind it was blowing the devil of a gale."

Chorus: "Royals free—Royals free."

Solo: "With a Ring-tail set all abaft the mizzen peak, To see Britannia a-ploughing up the deep."

Chorus: "Royals free—Royals free, Studding sails aloft, boys, Royals free."

Solo: "And now the wind begins for to blow, It's in with your Ring-tail quickly oh."

Chorus: "Royals free-Royals free."

Solo: "Clew up the to'gallant sails and take 'em in again;
Bear a hand, jolly tar, at the mizzen fore and main."

Chorus: "Royals free—Royals free, Studding sails aloft, boys, Royals free."

Solo: "Now we poor sailors are a-trampin' on the deck,
With the nasty cold rain all a-blowin' down our necks."

Chorus: "Royals free—Royals free."

Solo: "Not a dram of grog can the old man afford;
But it's 'Damn your eyes!' at every other word."

Chorus: "Royals free—Royals free, Studding sails aloft, boys, Royals free."

Solo: "Now that old fellow he's both dead and gone, But he's left to us his one and only son—"

Chorus: "Royals free—Royals free—

8010: "And if he don't prove both kind and frank, So help me Jimmy, we'll make him walk the plank."

Chorus: "Royals free—Royals free," Studding sails aloft, boys, Royals free."

Studding sails, you must know, are auxiliary sails rigged out at either end of the yards, and were invented, I am proud to say, by a woman in the old pirate days, when a gallant ship was being hard pressed by an enemy bearing the ominous

black flag with the white skull and cross-bones. The Captain's wife, who was on board the fugitive, must have been a woman of heroic nerve, for while the whole crew were in a perfect panic of fear, every scrap of canvas then known having been set, and the enemy still drawing down upon them, she was yet able to use her wits to a good purpose, and at last made the suggestion that some of the spare sails should be fastened, by the help of ropes and spars, to the ends of the yards. Either the men were very desperately frightened or they were more broadminded than shell-backs are now, for they consented to try her plan; the studding sails were rigged up somehow, and the ship literally walked away from her enemy. Yet, in spite of this being a generally acknowledged fact, nowhere can I find recorded the name of that woman; advice from our sex appearing to be like kisses—taken, but not told of.

The bottom of our ship is found to be thickly encrusted with barnacles. Day after day I have been hanging over the taffrail watching them gather almost up to the water-line, but not a single beak or feather has yet appeared. Charlotte has suggested to one of the passengers—the third, whom I have never yet mentioned, because

he is so dull, and dull people are too common to be worth writing about—that, as his "strength is in sitting still," he should get the sailors to gather a few, and try what a little animal warmth will do in hatching them out. But he only looks at her with a lack-lustre eye, which says, a plainly as words can: "I know you are mad; but it doesn't interest me in the least."

"I can't understand an attitude of mind like that," Charlotte confides to me. "Most people are interesting. But people who are a little mad are the interestingest of all." This is Charlotte's grammar, not mine. "Even the third mate seemed almost thrilling that day we really thought he was quite mad. But this cre-a-ture"—and she rolls the word out on her tongue with infinite scorn—"is like that Briton Dickens writes of, who said: 'I don't know anything, I don't care for anything, I don't make out anything, and I don't want anything."

"I don't know who that is," says the Scotch lawyer, who has stopped by Charlotte's side, and is looking down at her with a certain softening of his hatchet-like face; "but I want something very badly, and I have come begging. Have you any tissue-paper, Mrs. Maitland? We have run out of cigarette-papers, and we have used up

every scrap we can find on board. The mate and I——"

"Oh!" interjected Charlotte; "so that's what you do in the middle watch, is it—smoke cigarettes?" For the Scotch passenger's habit of keeping the midnight watch with Mr. Macgregor, and, as the result, sleeping in his bunk the best part of the day, had, early in the voyage, earned him the nickname of the Evening Primrose.

"Guilty, your honour."

"I have tissue-paper," she reflected, "in my big trunk in the store."

"It's easily got at," said the Scotchman hopefully.

"Yes, it's easily got at; but it's stuffing out the long lace sleeves of my best evening dresses. If I give it to you, what can you find to put in its place?"

"Leave that to me;" and the tone was so confident that Charlotte rolled out of her long chair and preceded him down to the store, the keys of which were kept in the mate's cabin, while I could see, by the amused little smile she cast at me, as she moved off, that he would get the paper, if only that she might satisfy her curiosity as to what he would find to put in its place.

"Do come down," she entreated half an hour

later, poking her head up over the top of the companion—"do come and look at them; they are in the saloon. It's the funniest sight possible."

It was indeed a funny sight. At the long table sat the Scotch passenger and second mate, smoothing white sheets of tissue-paper with the handles of dinner-knives, and cutting them into little squares, while the first mate was gently but firmly stuffing out the sleeves of Charlotte's dainty bodices with the pink paper pulled off whisky-bottles-having borrowed the key of the lazarette from the Captain, and stripped every bottle it contained—till they bore a ludicrous likeness to very fat, overdone arms, which I only wish that the "Madame" responsible for those creations of lace and chiffon could have seen, for I am sure that not in her wildest dreams could she have imagined them being stuffed out with pink paper from whisky-bottles, in the smoke-laden atmosphere of a sailing-ship's saloon.

But, then, who could have imagined anything in the least like our present existence—the amount of things, beforetimes regarded as the ordinary impedimenta of life, that we have learnt to do without, and the amount of fresh air to which we have grown accustomed, and can never do without any more?

CHAPTER XXI

"O that men should put an enemy in their mouths, to steal away their brains!"—Othello.

ALL yesterday a ship was creeping up on our bows: in the beginning only a tiny speck, even when a wave lifted us higher than usual—

"At first it seemed a little cloud,
And then it seemed a mist;
It grew and grew, and took at last
A certain shape I wist."

And now, when we awake this morning, she has passed us, and with mizzen top-sails courteously laid to the mast, is waiting to speak with us, the prettiest sight imaginable as she hovers, like some white-winged bird, against the background of fleecy pink and grey clouds which deck the dawn. Only the Captain is not pleased, for she announces herself as being the *Glenesslen*, only seventy-three days out from Liverpool. Now, I wish she had kept herself to herself, and not come disturbing our peaceful self-content with any tale of superior swiftness, or luck as I

tell the "Old Man." For myself I am in no hurry to end these happy days; but what depresses him must of necessity depress us also, seeing how he makes all our small worries his own. Even in the most trying times he is never too busy to remember all the hundred and one small daily kindnesses that he shows to every soul on board—an almost unique quality in my experience, for, indeed, generally speaking, humanity does not generally appear too well adapted to the ordinary wear and tear of everyday life; while that "milk of human kindness," about which people speak so glibly, is of far too varying a quantity and quality to be counted on, being at one time thick with cream, in which every atom of goodness appears to have risen to the top, at another so thin it seems scarcely worth the trouble of skimming, and hardly even a fit offering for the consideration of the pigs; while, after a little, the supply runs exceedingly short, or the uncertain animal from which it is obtained goes completely dry without the faintest warning, even turning to gore those who have most depended on her and fed her with the most lavish hand.

But the Captain's kindness is of that sort which will not allow of any cynicism, so Charlotte and

I do all we can to comfort him for what he looks on as a species of defeat—for we have been out far more than seventy days—and so start and sing a perfect pæon of thankfulness for the health and happiness that every extra day has brought us; till he brightens up, and begins to swear a little, which is always a good sign. Eighty-seven days we make it—eighty-seven days! Where have they gone?

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It has been a day of almost complete calm, the hush and quiet intensifying at sunset, till there was something mystic and cathedral-like in the atmosphere of hushed peace, while I never saw anything in my life more beautiful than this evening has been. Overhead the sky, arched like an immense concave opal, without flaw or blemish -pale silvery gold where it met the sea, then pink, and blue, and violet. I could never have imagined such a wealth of colour—it seemed to me like the foundations of the miraculous city we are told of in Revelations. "The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolyte; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a

jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst." I have not the faintest idea of what many of these stones are like, but the image of the whole glowing radiance was irresistibly brought to my mind as I watched the glory of the sky wax and wane, and the moon arise luminous and white, like the gates of pearl.

The way that sailor-men will talk in the most casual and heartless fashion, and at the same time do all that in them lies to minister to any one of their fellows who is in pain or trouble, was brought home to me to-day by overhearing a conversation the mate was having with "Gibbon"—as the Lancashire lad has been inevitably nicknamed. The mate has some curious cuts on his head and face, which do not add to his beauty, yet which he regards with pride as being the mementos of sundry adventures and fights; though he declared, with some self-righteousness, that he has never actually killed a man.

"Never seen one die, either, but once," he continued ruminatingly, "and that was on a voyage home from Java, when one after another of our men got laid up with fever. I was giving one fellow an egg-flip, with brandy in it, when back he flopped, with his mouth wide open, and very queer he looked, too. Just then the carpenter went by the deck-house, where we were,

and I sung out to him to come and have a look at the chap. 'Why, he's a stiff!' he said, 'as dead as a door-nail.'

"'I bet you a quid of tobacco he ain't,' I declared; but I was a fool for my pains, for he went off and fetched a piece of looking-glass and held it against the fellow's lips, and sure enough he was, as dead as he'd ever be."

This was too much for my feelings, and rather indignantly I broke in with, "What a brutal thing to bet like that as to whether a man was dead or not!"

The mate turned his tolerant blue eyes in my direction, and rolled his quid into his other cheek before he spoke; then, not in self-defence, but in sheer amazement, informed me that he had been up with the man each night for a full week, every moment of his watch below. "It was no good howling when he was dead, was it?" he continued practically; "and I lost a quid of tobacco through him, after all." I was rebuked. It is no light thing for a man who has been baking in the sun or wet to the skin, buffeting with wind and wave; with every sense alert, in the open air for hours on end, to keep awake in a stuffy deck-house or foc'sle, by the side of a sick comrade.

The beginning of the end has come. For days past everyone has been working their hardest at painting and varnishing, the rivalry between the port watch, which is the first mate's, and the starboard watch, which is the second's, being intense; till even Charlotte and I caught the infection, and, commandeering brushes and paintpots, painted our cabin-doors, bunks, and fittings all a beautiful creamy white, Charlotte's finishingtouch being the ship's monogram in dark blue and gold above the upper bunk. It was very sticky, and every garment we had was splashed with cream paint, while it smelt horribly for days; but our pride supported us through it all, for we have become almost as fanatically engrossed in "her" as the Captain is, and would suffer anything that "she" should appear to advantage in Adelaide. Ah! that's the trouble. That is what all this oiling, and painting, and holystoning is for. Any day now, three at the most if the winds hold good—"good" is the Captain's word, not mine—we may sight lonce more the "steady, unendurable land." I do not know how I shall bear it. I simply don't know how I shall bear it! And Charlotte feels the same—at least, Charlotte's poignant regret is expressed with more open abandonment than

mine is. She certainly says more—a great deal more—about it, but somewhere at the back of my mind, which is sharpened by my love for this dear life, for the ship, for the sea, is a suspicion that Charlotte is what our nurses used to call "working herself up." You may have witnessed the process in babies—the fearful convulsion of the face, the prolonged dry-eyed roar, and then the tears in floods. I know, of course, that Charlotte will be sorry; that she realizes most intensely how much she owes to this ship, and all that the voyage has brought her. But at the back of her sorrow there is a Hope—with a big H. For myself, I somehow feel that it is the end of everything; that I cannot endure the thought of the trouble to be incurred in starting life all over again, or imagine what Charlotte can possibly find to hope for; or pretend that I cannot, for, of course, I know. Upon my word, I believe marriage is a sort of habit that some people can never shake themselves free of; for myself, if I had Charlotte's experiences I would insure against it, for she loses every penny of her money if she marries again, and she will need something to console her.

All this evening we have been on the lookout for lights, and at about nine o'clock the man at

the crow's-nest called out that he saw them to the bow. In another hour we could all see them plainly from the deck, tiny twinkling points, to the starboard, the harbingers of our journey's end, my only comfort being that we do not disembark at Adelaide, but go straight on to Melbourne—poor enough consolation, for it is only another week's journey at the very most, even with the most favourably unfavourable winds. This paragraph is really nothing more than a parenthesis. From the time we sight the lights of Adelaide, and are towed up into the harbour between flat mud-banks, dotted with mangroves, my pen is idle. This book is a book of the sea. I am possessed with it, jealous for it, and will not write another word till we are once more towed out into the open bay.

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The land has infected us again. The white decks are roughened and muddy, the furled canvas is thick with soot; while, saddest of all, the crew have broached some of the cargo of whisky, and are in such a state that they can neither square the yards nor set the sails, so that all the noise, the filth, and the wickedness of the city seem to cling around us; while out in the

bay, where the tug leaves us, the fog is so thick that one can scarcely see a foot beyond the taffrail.

Last night we anchored in hopes that both the fog and the men's heads would have cleared, but this morning both were still in as hopeless a condition as ever. The Captain had to go back to the office to report on the proceedings, and took the second mate and one of the boys with him to row, also Charlotte, who I felt was better away from the scene of desolation that the ship presented. The three other passengers had left us at Adelaide, also the third mate, as only two were kept on during the stay in Australia; so that the cook, the first mate, the three other boys, and myself were the only responsible people left on board, planté là in the depths of the fog.

Half an hour after the small boat had started, as I was sitting over the saloon fire reading, toasting my toes, and trying to ignore the steward, who was talking incessantly, the mate rushed into the saloon with a white face to ask if I had any brandy, as a man had fallen down the forehatch, and was killed. With some effort of self-control I refrained from asking why the man wanted brandy if he was dead, but got my flask

out of our cabin and followed the mate up to the bows, where the open hatch was. Down, down he climbed, an unutterable depth, as it seemed, and, lifting the inert mass at the bottom, tried to force brandy between the man's tightly clenched teeth, then called up to me for swabs and hot water that he might wash some of the blood away. It seemed a long way back to my cabin, and so, turning into the kitchen, I asked Denis if he had plenty of hot water.

"Lashins and lavins," he answered promptly.

"Then give me a knife and turn your back," said I, on which he handed me a huge instrument, and turned his broad back—like the chivalrous Irishman he was—full upon me, while I sheared off as much of my white, shore-going underskirts as I could get at, twisted the lengths of linen round the handle of the kettle, and, calling one of the apprentices, got him to lash a rope round the whole thing, and let it down the hold.

A breathless hush fell upon the group gathered close round the edge of the hatch, as we watched the mate wipe away the thick mask of the blood from the wounded man's head, and again try to force a little brandy between his teeth, till at last, as he moved a trifle and we heard a groan

echo up from that horrible depth, a breath of relief shook us all like a wind among fir saplings. I can scarcely bear to write of the men, those rough, cheerful, brave, and all-enduring comrades of the "great water." It seemed almost impossible that they should be the same as those repulsive, drink-sodden creatures gathered round. the hatch, frightened for the moment into some degree of sobriety by fear—a fear which touched me as nearly as it did them, for had not I and that distorted figure down in the dim hold been shipmates for months, through sunshine and cloud, through storm and calm—and yet, the moment the fact dawned upon them that the man was not really dead, breaking forth again into maudlin weeping and laughing, cursing and singing.

The next difficulty lay in getting the poor fellow up into the light of day again, and the mate sung out for us to let a shutter down to draw him up on. The thought struck me that if there was a mattress tied securely to it, he could lie upon the deck, and so escape being twice moved. At a word one of the apprentices flew off to the other end of the ship and came back with one—mine, as I found later—and this was firmly fastened on to the shutter, which was then lowered,

the wounded man lifted, secured to it, and drawn up.

The horror of that apparently endless task I shall never forget. The man was immensely bulky and heavy, and the slab of wood itself (one of the shutters from the main hatch) no light weight, while at the top, where there was no leverage of any sort to be gained, there were only three slim boys and a group of drunken men at the ropes, the latter, now that the first shock was over, relapsing into a perfectly good-tempered and utterly unmanageable state. Just as the heavy load was half-way up one of the men loosed his hold to give a better emphasis with both hands to his rendering of "He's a jolly good fellow!" and the rope slipped with a sickening little whirr, luckily only a few inches, though enough to give the shutter an ugly tip. That was the last straw, and, my temper and nerves alike giving way with a snap under the strain, I started and talked to the men as I could not have believed myself capable of talking—even to a snake. I abused them, and their nationalities, and their origin, and their relations like a Hindoo; and, using my one woman's weapon as a whip, lashed them into a sort of amazed sobriety, till the heavy shutter, with its ghastly burden, was

lifted safely to the deck, and the mate clambered up after it.

As I got more hot water out of the galley and began to bathe the injured man's head, he recovered consciousness a little, aided by the exhortations of his particular friend, a Cockney, who entreated him to rouse himself, as it was not every day "'e'd 'ave a laidy a-washing of 'is bloomin' nut." However, his right arm and shoulder were twisted under him in such a nasty-looking way, and he groaned so when we attempted to move him, that we came to the conclusion a doctor was needed. The difficulty was to find one, for the fog had thickened so that we could not see from one end of the ship to the other. However, the only thing was to try and make the shore as near the town as possible, and, a boat being lowered, the mate set off in it with two of the boys, inviting me to come with him if I was frightened, which, luckily, I was not, my dread of the drunken men being quite outbalanced by my anxiety about the wounded one.

Luckily, a big liner was lying quite close alongside of us, unseen in the fog, from which a very dapper young doctor was borrowed and brought back in triumph by the mate. I was so busy alternately cutting and bathing the caked blood

away from the hair and beard of the wounded man to try and ascertain how much injury was done-squatting cross-legged at the end of the shutter, with his head in my lap—that I did not see anyone come on board till the dishevelled crew parted and disclosed the grimy, harassedlooking little mate and the genteel apparition at his side, resplendent in blue and gold, staring with unfeigned amazement at my patient and myself. Later on I gave the doctor tea in the saloon, and never in all my life have I met a man more frankly curious as to what had brought me into the midst of such a ménage; pitying, too, which annoyed me so that I felt like telling him that I preferred a man drunk to a doll sober. As a matter of fact, I hate anything like intemperance too utterly for words, though, for all that, I could not stand seeing my men sneered at. After all, I feel sure he is not infallible, for he has treated the man only for cuts and bruises on the head, and a broken collar-bone, while I am sure, from the absolute lack of feeling in his legs, when, on the Captain's return, he was moved into a spare cabin, that there is some injury to the spine. Poor wretch! he has paid dearly for his carousal—such a good fellow, too, and so grateful for the little that Charlotte and I can

do for him! What an awful price one pays for certain sins! And yet there are others, to my mind far worse—perpetual unkindness, ill-temper, slander, and scorn—that are triumphant to the very end, and with which it would appear that Providence has no time to interfere.

CHAPTER XXII

"I must forth again to-morrow!
With the sunset I must be
Hull down on the trail of rapture
In the wonder of the sea."

ALL night it has been raining. Now this morning, as I write, the sky is clear and blue. The men, but for their weary eyes and drawn faces, are themselves once more—all save the one in the spare cabin. The wind is blowing steadily from the sou'-east, the anchor is being catted, the yards squared, and the sail set. It is good beyond words to see the canvas washed white again and bellying out joyously against the mottled sky; to hear the tramp, tramp of the men as they move round the capstan, the exercise and the clean air bringing the colour back to their white, unshaven faces. Connor starts the best of all chanties, "Away Rio," and they all join in the chorus, their voices gaining strength and heartiness at every verse. They are not only

mast-heading a yard—that is the least part of their job—they are working to gain back their manhood, and their strength, and their clean sea selves.

"Oh, the anchor is weighed, and the sails they are set,
Away Rio!
The girls we are leaving, we'll never forget.

Chorus: "For we're bound to Rio Grande.
And away Rio, aye Rio!
Sing fare ye well, my bonny, bonny gel;
We're bound for Rio Grande!"

"So man the capstan and run it round,
Away Rio!
We'll heave up the anchor to this jolly sound.

"For we're bound to Rio Grande.
And away Rio, aye Rio," etc.

"We've a fine good ship and a fine good crew,
Away Rio!
A jolly fine mate and captain too.

"For we're bound to Rio Grande.

"For we're bound to Rio Grande. And away Rio, aye Rio,' etc.

"We sing as we heave to the girls we leave,
Away Rio!
And you wives too, good-bye to you.

"For we're bound to Rio Grande

"For we're bound to Rio Grande And away Rio, aye Rio," etc.

"Come, heave up the anchor, and we'll get away,
Away Rio.

It's stuck in the mud, so heave steady, I say

"For we're bound to Rio Grande And away Rio, aye Rio," etc.

"Heave with a will, and heave long and strong,
Away Rio!
And sing all together this jolly good song.

"For we're bound to Rio Grande.
And away Rio, aye Rio," etc.

Charlotte has been washing her hair to-day, as it is drizzling with rain on deck, and there is a splendid fire in the saloon stove. I am thankful that Nature has seen fit to deal out my crop to me with such a niggardly hand, as I watch her wrestle with her mass of wavy brown tresses. Alternately I rub till her head aches, and she sits with her back to the fire till she feels sick. But we do not seem to get on much till the mate, as usual, comes to the rescue, wraps it all in a towel, and wrings it out, with the help of a belaying-pin, till not a drop of moisture is left in it, and there is only the scalp to rub dry. "What shall I do without you?" says Charlotte, her soul in her eyes.

"I wouldna deceive you for the world," responds Mr. Macgregor solemnly; "but we mates are not allowed to carry our wives aboard with us."

"Thank you," answered my lady, a fine colour in her face, her eyes twinkling with mischief; "but wait till you're asked. I am already engaged, I'm afraid."

Later on I tax her with this, and demand whether it is true. "Not exactly," she replies; "but it might be. Besides, of course, you know I was only joking."

- "I know—upon my word, child, all that I know is how much I don't know."
 - "Well, I'm not."
- "That's all right," I answered, very much relieved.
 - "But I might be."
- "Oh, I've no time to bother about 'mights' or 'might-have-beens.' Come up on deck; it's nearly stopped raining, and I don't want to miss a moment of the sea or the open air now that we are so near the end."

Near the end we were indeed, for three days later and we have sighted Cape Otway, and run up signals to inform the men on the lookout who we are; while a few more hours and we reach Port Phillip Heads, and take the pilot on board, the hugest person, with the hugest voice, that I have ever encountered, though he is as agile as a cat in climbing up the ship's side. Only four days at sea this time, and the voyage as good as over, with the other three and a half months gone like a dream. There is a little respite indeed, for the ship must be laid to, with main topsail

to the mast, to wait for the flood-tide; but already, as it seems to me, my beloved barque is drooping with the boredom of the land, and though she cheers up a little when all the sails are set, and she speeds in gallantly through the Heads, we and I both know—for we love each other—that it is all over; that for three weary months she will lie shorn of all her beauty, begrimed with soot and mud in the dock, while I must pat down, tie up, cover over the "wander fever" that possesses me; and, indeed, I have a mental picture of myself as a pot of preserves securely bottled away from the life I love, while the parchment that ties it down is, oddly enough, labelled "Charlotte." For I am inwardly convinced that my lady will never take that return voyage round by the Horn, which for so long I regarded as being the inevitable second edition of this; while to go alone is out of the question, for the Captain informs me that they would not be allowed to take only one woman, "unless she is travelling with her husband." I might, perhaps, be tempted; but, after all, life is longer than the longest voyage—and what then?

There has again been a thick fog during the whole morning, and though quite near the shore, we had to drop our anchor and lie to. At mid-

day, however, it lifted, and the tug—odious, fussy thing!—came out to us, with the Melbourne health officer on board, to give us the clean bill of health that I could wish we had not got. Once, on a ten days' voyage, we had a case of plague, and had to run out again to sea for close on a month. But here we are, all odiously healthy. As for Charlotte, I never saw anything like her cheeks and her eyes at the sight of the other man who was beside the health officer on board the little tug, or the look of them both as he climbed on deck and they stood holding each other's hands, quite regardless of onlookers.

"Where do I come in?" questioned the pilot, who was near to me, with a broad grin on his face, making use, as I afterwards discovered, of the first pure Australianism that I was to hear. But it expressed my feelings to a nicety. "Where do I come in?" Was it for this that I had fattened Charlotte up so assiduously, like a lamb for the sacrifice?

Later on Dr. Dare—for, of course, it was he—came up and held both my hands too (only with a difference), and thanked me for the care I had taken of her. These men, the Captain with his "she" and this one with his "her"—they are past my patience!

"It's made a new woman of her," he said to finish with.

"I'm glad you think so," I responded tartly, feeling I must snap or cry. "Only, what puzzles me is why, when you were so determined that it would be the death of her, you came out all this way to meet her."

"I simply cannot tell you what it was," he said, so feelingly that my heart softened to him a little. "I was never in such a funk in my life till I got her letter."

"What letter?"

"Why, posted on some boat that was becalmed near yours. By Jove! I started off directly I got that."

And this was the first I had heard of it! So much for a bosom friend.

The men are tramping round the capstan again, and the anchor is coming slowly up, heavy with mud, for we are to be docked close to the quay. It is the last of the chanties that is being sung—the last, perhaps, that I shall ever hear.

Solo: "The work was hard, the voyage was long."

Chorus: "Leave her, Johnny, leave her!"

Solo: "The seas were high, the winds were strong."

Chorus: "Leave her, Johnny, leave her."

"That will do, men," says the first mate at the end of a voyage when the anchor is catheaded and fished and all made snug. It is the crew's real, though unofficial, dismissal, and means that they are free to gather their belongings together and take their pay; that no one on that ship, anyhow, needs them for the present. They can sign on again later for the return voyage if they like; but that is their business alone.

"That will do." I feel that the Captain, who is too busy with the Customs-house officers, the mate, who is too busy with the stevedores, and Charlotte and Dr. Dare, who are too busy with each other to take any notice of anybody else, are all tacitly saying that to me, and where, as the pilot says, "do I come in"? After a little misanthropic musing of this sort, I retire to our cabin and relieve my feelings by packing savagely; fastening straps as if I was wringing the neck of the entire world, and jamming down box-lids with a vindictive force that really does something to calm me. Thus occupied, I am discovered by Charlotte, and her cry of "Oh, Crabsticks!" as she clings to me and laughs and cries all at once soothes away every atom of my selfish regrets.

"I could never have married—I would never

have married him, if I had not been quite, quite strong. A doctor does not want to find patients instead of those what-you-call-them on his own hearth," she declared. Whether she meant angels or crickets is a minor matter. "And if you hadn't infected me with a little of your splendid courage"—" splendid courage!" it sounds so well, I "visibly swell" at the words—" and managed everything, and borne the brunt of everything, and taken all the risk of bringing me this voyage, I should never have got better; for I should never have found out that I could get better. When I think what I was when I started, you are a perfect hero, Crabsticks."

"Humbug!" said I; but the praise ran like sweet warm wine through all my veins. And the world seemed really quite a cheerful sort of place once more.

Charlotte is married, and she and her husband have started, amidst showers of congratulations and rice from all of the ship's crew that we were able to collect, up to Queensland for their honeymoon. During what remained of the afternoon after seeing them off I sat in my room writing letters hard, not giving myself a single moment to think, for, really, most letters can be written

quite well without any such effort. But the dusk was gathering thickly, and as I lay down my pen the thoughts that I had kept at bay all day came out of the dim corners and confronted me. Charlotte's happiness, her extraordinary courage in the face of such memories as she must have; Dr. Dare's tenderness and pride, and then the image of myself, grey and thin, and shadowy, shrunk to the substance of a ghost, looking on at life, never joining in it, seeing the fire flicker, and others growing warm and rosy at its blaze, while I—what had I gained from life excepting my boasted immunity from any cold?

The dusk gathered to darkness. Only, outside my window the city, which lay beneath me, was veiled still in a mist of rose and grey; while hundreds of people hurried through the streets, converging towards the two railway-stations like a swarm of bees flocking to the exit of the hive. The day's work was over, and they were going home, many of them, to intolerable set smug villas, for any immovable residence seemed horrible to me after such months of incessant movement, to Heaven only knows what frets and worries—and yet home.

As the lights leapt out one by one in the shops and streets, my loneliness became tangible.

Little grey ghosts of "might-have-been's" or "might-be's" flitted out from among the shadows—spectre people, with wistful, longing eyes. "Give us a little warm blood," they seemed to say; "take any risks—any—but give us life in your life."

Then from the harbour, a mile and a half away, came the insistent bellow of a foghorn. It is not a poetical sound, but it stirred me so that I could bear that close, intolerably steady room, that prim-set furniture no longer, and I flung on my coat and hat, ran downstairs—I could not trust the lift to go fast enough—and told the hall-porter to call me a cab at once. Suddenly I was possessed by a fury of hurry. The horse seemed to crawl, and I put my head out of the window to tell the man that I would give him double fare if he would only go faster, on which he whipped his jaded steed into a hard gallop, and we rattled madly through the streets.

The smooth pavement was replaced by rough cobbles; the scent of the sea—even the dirty dock sea—was like wine to me. In and out among huge stacks of timber and coal, past steamships, with their many glowing eyes, and the dim bulk of sailing-ships, each of which sent my heart up into my throat — on and on we

went, till at last Dock 3 was reached, and the cabby pulled his panting horse back on its haunches, while I scrambled out, my money all ready in my hand to pay him.

"Yer needn't a' been in such a hurry," he growled, discontented misanthrope, as all cabmen are. "Why, they ain't even begun agettin' up steam yet."

Getting up steam! What an awful idea! And yet among the letters which still lay on my dressing-table was one to the P. and O. Company, asking for their prospectus—a letter which I must surely have written far away back in some other life.

"She" lay so close to the wharf it was only a step on to the taffrail, and then down to the deck, where Kruger was on watch—Kruger, who had been at the wedding, also far away back in the dark ages. We shook hands solemnly, while certain oblique cracks appeared on his wooden countenance, which almost made me believe that he was smiling; but he did not speak a word, only jerked his thumb in the direction of the saloon; and slowly now, for I was beginning to wonder why I had come, I moved down the alley-way.

If the door at the end had been shut, I believe

my courage would have forsaken me, and I should have turned and fled; but, luckily, it was wide open, and then there was no more doubt left in my mind.

The "Old Man" was sitting in front of the stove, his hands deep in his hip-pockets, his legs stretched out wide in front of him, with Boy perched miserably upon one knee; the stove was dead out, and the dirty lamp was smoking furiously and acridly.

Boy gave one leap to me. He circled round and round me, his back arched, his tail upright, stiff as a board, mewing his welcome in a perfect transport of delight, pushing against me, rearing himself upright. It was a veritable triumph of welcome.

The Captain drew up his legs and took his hands out of his pockets, his face white under the tan, his eyes oddly moist and eager.

"Eh, lassie!" he said; and then: "The fire's fair out."

"I'll get sticks; I'll make it burn," I declared, and fled, sure-footed through long experience, up the littered decks to the galley, where I pounced without compunction on the dry scraps of wood that Denis had stacked ready, before he went on shore, for the next morning's fire.

I still had on the new dress I had worn at the wedding. But what was a new dress in comparison with a fire, the eternal emblem of home? And, turning up the skirt, I had filled it with chips, and was just moving towards the door, when the Captain's tall figure blocked out the little light there had been.

"Why did you come back?" he asked. His voice was odd and strained; it reminded me of that day when the spanker boom had carried away, and I thought he was glad to have us on deck, and safe under his eye.

"To light your fire, 'Old Man.'"

"You can no come back with us—you ken that fine. The fire will have to go out again."

I backed a little, for his voice frightened me—a nice sort of frightenedness, though. Boy was rubbing against my knees again, mewing and purring all at once in the most persevering fashion.

"There is—there is—a—a sort of way," I said weakly.

"Only one way. The company will no let us take a woman alone, unless—you know. I told you before, and you said you would never dare—that it was all such a risk."

"That was yesterday; and now—now I'm sort of liking to take risks."

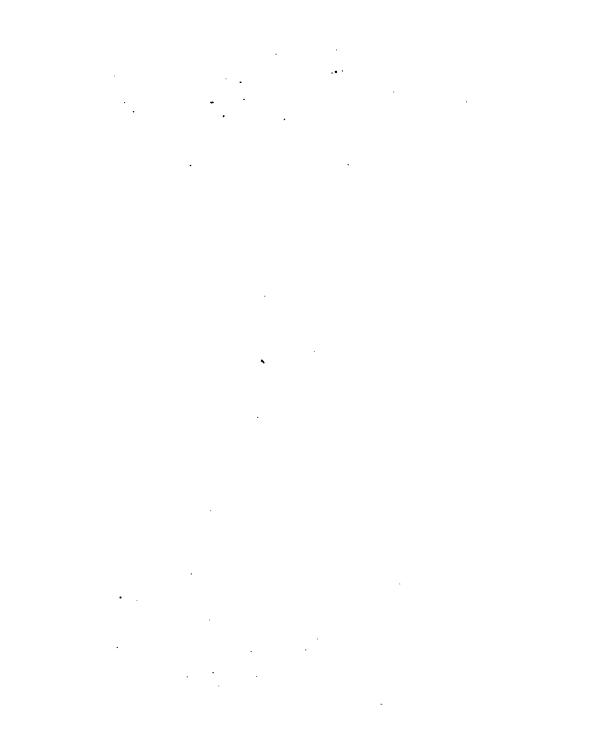
The galley lightened a little—that was because he had come in from the doorway. And I backed and backed, till I backed against Denis's stove, which was hot. Then there seemed no place left but the "Old Man's" arms.

The ship is not still—not immovably, unfeelingly still, like that horrible hotel, for she is swinging a tiny bit to the touch of the tide against her sides. It is like a mother patting her child off to sleep—the one great mother.

THE END



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